STEWARDSHIP SHORT: Water Conservation

Coastal Stewards

Take Action

Disconnect and Collect

Garden Green

Conserve Freshwater

Explore

Visit a green infrastructure demonstration site
coastalgadnr.org/DemoSites

Cay Creek Wetlands Interpretive Center
www.coastalwildscapes.org/Cay-Creek

Connect

Savannah Tree Foundation
www.savannahtree.com

Department of Natural Resources- Coastal Resources Division
coastalgadnr.org

Georgia Forestry Commission
www.gfc.state.ga.us

UGA Marine Extension and Georgia Sea Grant
gacoast.uga.edu

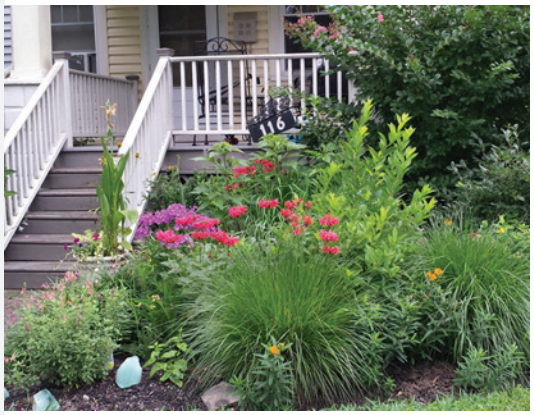
Coastal Wildscapes
www.coastalwildscapes.org

The health of our coastal waterways is everyone's responsibility. Green infrastructure helps protect and restore habitat by mimicking the natural water cycle. By using low impact development practices at home, you can help prevent flooding and pollution by promoting treatment and absorption of stormwater at the source. Stormwater is water from rainfall or other precipitation that falls on impervious surfaces where it cannot be absorbed such as pavement or roofs.

Action 1 | DISCONNECT AND COLLECT

Rainwater often flows off roofs to driveways, directing water into storm drains. Most water that enters storm drains will go directly to waterways without getting treated. Implementing the strategies below can decrease the amount of pollution flowing into streams and rivers.

- Reduce rooftop runoff by rerouting gutter downspouts, allowing water to flow onto grass or gravel and seep into the ground. This is called downspout disconnection.
- Collect and store stormwater from your gutter using rain barrels.



Action 2 | GARDEN GREEN

Lawns and gardens can be a source of pollution if fertilizer, pet waste and pesticides run off with stormwater. By using green infrastructure practices, outdoor spaces can be transformed into effective tools for slowing and treating water.

- Plant a rain garden in a shallow basin, allowing the water to collect and slowly infiltrate.
- Leave forested areas or other natural vegetation on your property intact whenever possible.
- Landscape with native plants from the Georgia coast. These plants are well-adapted to grow locally, requiring less fertilizer and water. They also provide food and shelter for wildlife and beneficial insects that eat unwanted pests, eliminating the need for pesticides.
- Pick up and properly dispose of pet waste. Pet waste can harbor bacteria like E. coli.

Action 3 | CONSERVE FRESHWATER

Less than 1 percent of all the water on earth is fresh and available for consumption, and we all share it. Unfortunately, this water is under threat from overconsumption, saltwater intrusion, and more frequent and severe drought. The Floridan aquifer is an underground layer of water that provides the main drinking water source for a large portion of the Southeast, including coastal Georgia. Withdrawals from this source have increased by five times over the past 60 years. This groundwater can supply wetland habitats as well as the water we use in our homes. The following water conservation tips will help reduce the amount of groundwater you consume.

- Fix leaks immediately, as they can waste up to 180 gallons per week.
- Install or replace old appliances with water-efficient ones.
- Remember to turn the water off while brushing your teeth and avoid taking long showers.
- Water your plants in the evening to prevent water loss from evaporation during the day.
- Position your sprinklers so that they water your plants, not driveways and sidewalks.
- Allow freshwater from rain to replenish groundwater by using low impact development practices such as replacing impervious areas with permeable surfaces.
- Use water collected from a rain barrel to irrigate your plants.

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Water Conservation References

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