



## **Water: Flood or Famine**

Isn't it amazing that water can offer you a place to play, the quiet solitude of a bubbling spring, and a way to grow that perfect tomato?

What if there isn't enough water in the future? How will you cope with water restrictions? Could your lifestyle and your water use become more compatible if there were an easy way to do it? Would you like to control the cost of getting water, and the chemicals in the water that comes to your home?

Consider having all the water you want for free. You decide when and how to use it, for whatever you want on your property. Yes, this is completely possible, and you can achieve it in only a few days time!

Sustainable landscape design and special structures allow you to harvest all of the water you need. The same systems that make this possible also protect you and your property when it rains too hard or when snow melts too fast. Is your basement wet now? It is possible that water is just not being used the way it should be on your property.

Interesting facts:

- A city lot that is 75 feet by 100 feet in size will produce more than 85,000 gallons of water - just from precipitation in a normal year in Wisconsin.
- The average house and attached garage roof will have about 1500 gallons of water runoff in a one-inch rainfall.

- The average person uses less than 40 gallons of water a day.
- A one-quarter acre lawn with a sprinkler system will use roughly 80,000 gallons of water in just 12 weeks; a one-acre lot will use a whopping 320,000 gallons of water in that same amount of time!
- Sewage systems contain less than three percent (3%) solid waste. The rest started out as clean, unpolluted water, which is used only to transport the waste.

Ever see our “Lawns are for Losers” bumper sticker? We promoted it because we perceived - and knew - that there was an incredible waste of water used by people who wanted to keep their turf alive and green all summer. A large part in the success of sustainable water use is planning how your particular property will use it.

What do you like to do in your yard?

Do you want a place for the kids to play?

Would you like to grow flowers and vegetables?

What about a pond or water feature?

This knowledge makes a difference in how water that comes to your property naturally will be used, reused and where it will go when you're done with it. Many times by reducing lawn areas, we can create other areas for activities you like to do. These areas will be designed to use substantially less water than your lawn.

Don't be misled by the do-it-yourself publications about rain barrels and rain gardens. Why would you go to the trouble and expense of installing a 50-gallon rain barrel that will only catch about three percent (3%) of the water draining from your home's roof? Will you run outside when it's full and empty it so it can refill? You can

have a rain garden, even if your soils retain water for 24 hours. The suggested depths of 4 to 8 inches won't hold much water in a downpour. Do you really know enough soil science to determine the type and size of bio-swales you'll need to make the most efficient use of rain falling on your property?

Why is there so much unreliable information about sustainable water use? Why do the methods for rainwater use focus on capturing only very small amounts of water? Could it be that your water utility really doesn't want to conserve water, especially when its income is derived from the volume of water used? What will your water utility, your well repair company, and your electric utility do for income when you realize that capturing rainfall is easy and the water quality is better?

One of our tasks at Eco-Building & Forestry is to help you get your water use under control. Here's how:

- Proper grading and bio-swales to channel and hold water.
- Design and install water containers with the capacity of thousands of gallons.
- Efficient, automated and solar powered systems to use the water you collect without the hassle.
- Just the right plants for your situation. Even eatable and wetland plants. Do you want to grow your own wild rice?
- Drip and micro-irrigation systems for highly efficient water use.
- Outdoor showers to experience rainwater soft bathing (during the summer) and grey water use so that nothing goes to waste. Why steam up your house when you can take a shower outside?

- Compost toilet designs to reduce water pollution and recycle nutrients. Why is Milorganite (sewage sludge from Milwaukee) shipped hundreds of miles when you generate your own?

Are you ready to get started on one of the best things that you can do for yourself and the environment? Call us today so we can help.