

## A BETTER WAY TO LIVE

Neighborhood Environmental Stewardship Team (NEST) promotes neighborhood involvement in environmentally friendly projects that restore and preserve our water resources. NEST focuses on providing education and guidance for neighbors and communities supporting hands-on activities that improve property and the quality of water that flows to our watersheds.

Our goal is to help communities stay involved in the management and protection of the water resources of Sarasota County and become advocates to promote healthy watersheds.

The best way to keep our bays and waterways clean and healthy is to minimize the pollutants we use in our yards and maximize our rainfall retention. Designing our yards to capture and use rainfall reduces overall watering and fertilizer costs, beautifies the landscape and increases curb appeal. These things help reduce pollutants in our watersheds and improve the quality of stormwater runoff reaching our bays.

## BE BAY FRIENDLY

Every home or business in Sarasota County is located within a watershed. A watershed is an area of land where all the rain and surface water runoff flows into a particular body of water. Watershed problems occur when the nutrients and pollutants in stormwater runoff from our yards, streets and parking areas make their way into a pond, lake, stream or bay. To properly maintain and improve the health of our water bodies, we must recognize that what we do on the land has a direct impact on the quality of the water around us.

### For more information, contact:

#### NEST program coordinator

941-861-5000

[www.scgov.net/Watersheds](http://www.scgov.net/Watersheds)

#### UF/IFAS Sarasota County Extension Service

941-861-5000

<http://sarasota.extension.ufl.edu>

#### Water Atlas

941-861-5000

[www.sarasota.wateratlas.usf.edu](http://www.sarasota.wateratlas.usf.edu)

#### Keep Sarasota County Beautiful

941-861-5000

[www.scgov.net/KSCB](http://www.scgov.net/KSCB)

#### Neighborhood Services

941-861-5000

[www.scgov.net/NeighborhoodServices](http://www.scgov.net/NeighborhoodServices)

#### Sarasota Bay Estuary Program

941-955-8085

[www.sarasotabay.org](http://www.sarasotabay.org)

#### Charlotte Harbor National Estuary Program

866-835-5785

[www.chnep.org](http://www.chnep.org)

# NEST

Neighborhood Environmental  
Stewardship Team



Connecting people  
with the land and  
water around them.

# 10 Ways you can help reduce rainwater runoff into our watersheds and protect our bays and waterways.

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## MINDFUL MOWING

- ▶ Use a mulching mower and set the blade to maximum height.
- ▶ Longer grass promotes deeper roots, has better water retention and prevents sun damage.
- ▶ Recycle grass clippings and yard trimmings to increase soil fertility and reduce waste leaving the site.

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## LIMIT FERTILIZER, PESTICIDES AND WATERING

- ▶ Use only 50 percent slow release fertilizer and natural pest control.
- ▶ Water no more than three quarters of an inch once a week (if needed) and use a rain sensor.
- ▶ Mature plants and trees need little to no additional watering or fertilizer.
- ▶ The fertilizer-free zone is 10 feet from any water body or wetland.

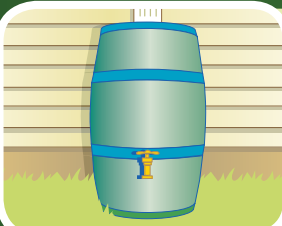
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## GO NATIVE

- ▶ Native plants suit our soils and rainfall patterns.
- ▶ Provide shelter and food sources for birds and butterflies.
- ▶ Planting landscape beds and using groundcover will require less mowing, watering and fertilizer.

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## CAPTURE AND REUSE RAIN WATER

- ▶ Install rain barrels or cisterns to catch the rain.
- ▶ Use roof rain gutters only when needed.
- ▶ Direct downspouts to plant beds or grassy areas.
- ▶ Collected water helps recharge groundwater when used on lawns and gardens.

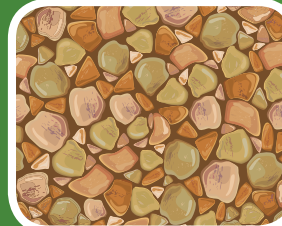
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## PLANT TREES

- ▶ Trees reduce the need for grass, fertilizer and mowing.
- ▶ Trees intercept rainwater and capture pollutants.
- ▶ Tree roots help rainwater infiltrate into the ground, reduce surface water runoff and erosion.

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## LET THE RAIN SOAK IN USING POROUS MATERIALS

- ▶ Use pavers instead of concrete to let the rain soak in.
- ▶ Use shell or stone for walkways and parking.
- ▶ Consider using pervious concrete or flexible pavement for sidewalks, driveways and parking areas.

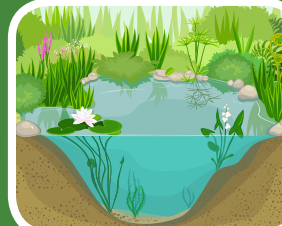
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## CREATE A RAIN GARDEN

- ▶ Rain gardens increase rainwater and groundwater infiltration.
- ▶ Rain gardens reduce stormwater runoff into our bays and waterways.
- ▶ Rain gardens create a natural habitat for birds, butterflies and other wildlife.
- ▶ Rain gardens clean stormwater before it leaves your property.

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## ENHANCE OUR PONDS, BAYS AND WATERWAYS

- ▶ Naturalize the shoreline with native plants.
- ▶ Participate in water body renovation projects to help minimize erosion.
- ▶ Floating plant islands improve water quality and habitat.
- ▶ Create a "maintenance free" zone between lawn and ditches, ponds, creeks and bays to reduce fertilizer contamination and erosion.

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## PICK UP PET WASTE AND LITTER

- ▶ Improve water quality.
- ▶ Removing pet waste reduces bacteria and harmful algal blooms in our waterways.
- ▶ Litter pollutes our waterways and can restrict flow in our stormwater pipes causing flooding.

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## CREATE OR JOIN A NEST GROUP

- ▶ Improve your neighborhood environment.
- ▶ Learn how to keep our water bodies healthy.
- ▶ Get involved, what we do in our yard affects everyone.
- ▶ Potentially increase the value of your home or property.