WATER FACTS

Spring - From Gardens to the LeTort

Lawn Basics: Why Does this Matter?

Natural landscapes can act as a "green filter" to rain and snow absorbing them into the ground and filtering out pollutants. On the other hand, impervious surfaces such as roads, roofs, and sidewalks work as a "grey funnel" streamlining precipitation into a nearby storm drain or stream washing pollution with it. Residential and on-campus lawns act somewhere between a green filter and grey funnel. Lawn compaction reduces the filtration of pollutants by up to 91% in some cases (Woltemade, 2010). This compaction increases runoff, which contains fertilizer, trash, and a variety of other pollutants into nearby waterways, like the LeTort Spring Run in Carlisle, PA. Stormwater in Carlisle does not receive treatment, so any pollutants that wash off lawns and gardens make their way to the LeTort.

To reduce runoff pollution and protect local waterways...

- plant landscapes with native, long-root vegetation to increase soil filtration;
- ensure gardens are populated with native vegetation to contribute to better soil health;
- install a rain barrel under the downspout of your residential or on-campus house to reduce stormwater runoff as well as store water for later use; and
- avoid stepping on the soils of gardens and around the base of plants and trees on campus to reduce soil compaction.

ALLARM is now hiring for the 2017-2018 academic year. To learn more about what ALLARM does, visit http://j.mp/allarmjob. Applications can be found by e-mailing ALLARM's director, Julie Vastine, and are due to vastine@dickinson.edu on Monday, April 3rd at 11:59PM.

Sources:
Chesapeake Bay Foundation   http://bit.ly/2IYCqWC
EPA   (June, 2006). Green Scaping: the Easy Way to a Greener, Healthier Yard.
JAWRA   Woltemade, C. J. (2010), Impact of Residential Soil Disturbance on Infiltration Rate and Stormwater Runoff1. Journal of the American Water Resources Association, 46: 700–711.

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