

# Dry Creek Beds

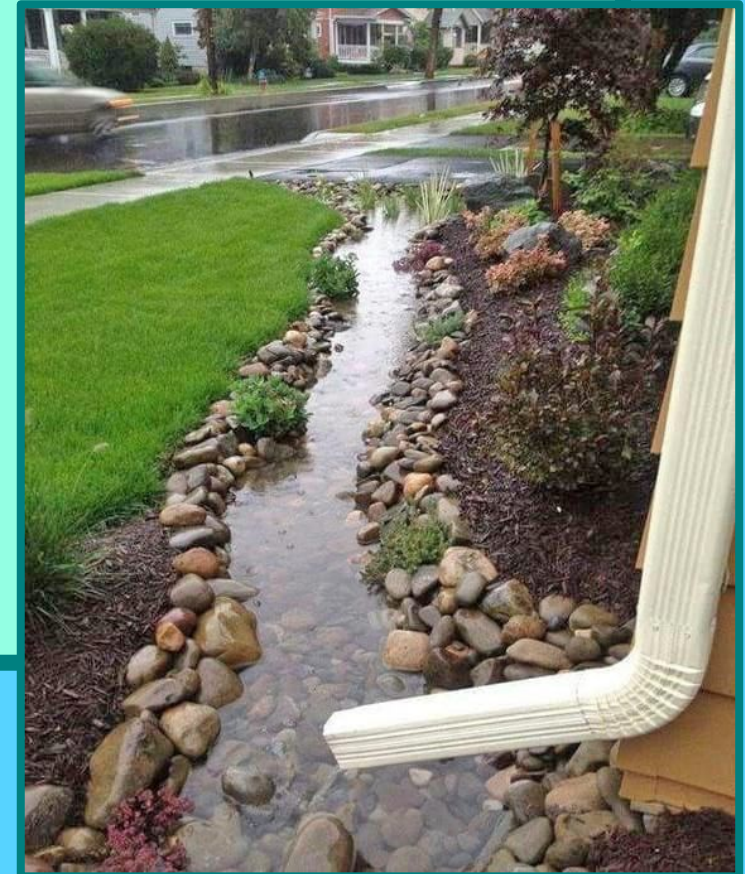
For Drainage Problems or Just for the Look



# Where Can I Put a Dry Creek Bed?

**Anywhere you need to move water from one place to another**

- An area in the yard that doesn't drain well.
- Around a downspout that collects water.
- A patio that tends to flood due to poor planning by the designer (yes, I was the designer).





## Or anywhere you think it would look nice

- As a focal point for your yard
- To divided planting beds from turf
- To use rocks you have collected
- To give the illusion of water.



# National WASP WWII Museum





# My Backyard









# The Pros and the Cons

## Pros

- Doesn't take much of a slope to get water moving
- You don't need heavy equipment
- Most of the things you will need are pretty affordable
- Depending on the size it can usually be done in a weekend

## Cons

- It may not work for large amounts of water right up next to your house.
- It does require digging
- You'll need rocks, lots of rocks



# Planning Your Creek Bed

- **Where will it start?** – this is probably pretty easy; wherever the water is coming from. If not coming from a downspout, the starting point may need to be fairly wide.
- **Where will it go?** – this is tougher. Do you need it to go off the property? Or just somewhere to soak in?
- **What route will it take?** – if you have a path the water naturally follows, that's great. But creeks meander, so you don't want it straight. Curves will also help to slow the water down, so more can soak in.
- **Don't forget to check for utility lines before you dig.**



# What You Will Need

- **Shovel** – there's that digging I was talking about
- **Spray paint** -- to mark the path of the creek
- **Tamper** – to pack the soil in the bottom of the bed
- **Landscape fabric** – will prevent your rocks from disappearing into the soil. You may also want a utility knife or scissors to cut it.
- **Rocks of various sizes** – you can use any you have, buy them at the rock yard, get from friends, or check on-line garage sales.
- **Cheap labor**, if you have it.

**4.** Keep your flattest, heaviest stones for first course & capstones

**1.** Plot a natural curving course down the slope

**6.** Use a large boulder or plants to make "headwaters" more interesting

**5.** Use small rocks in creek bed & large rocks along the side

**2.** Lay down landscaping fabric

**3.** Pile excavated dirt along sides to accentuate the trench

*How To Build a Dry Creek Bed* from  the spruce



# Digging

- Once you've marked your path with spray paint you start digging.
- Remember: the trench has to get deeper as you go and it doesn't take much of a slope to get water moving. So start pretty shallow. You can always go back and remove more.
- Pile the dirt a little back of the banks.
- Once you have it dug out like you want it, tamp down the dirt in the bottom



# Landscape Fabric

- This will help to suppress weeds and prevent the rocks from sinking into the soil. Don't use plastic.
- Use as good a landscape fabric as you can afford.
- You want it to cover the bottom and sides of the creek bed, plus a good 12 inches on either side
- You can use landscape staples to hold it in place, but I just used rocks.





# Rock Placement

- Place your largest rocks first. To look more natural, place your largest stones at of the curves of the bed.
- If you have enough larger rocks group some
- Next add your medium size rocks along the sides
- The smaller river rock will go mostly in the bed itself.
- To save on river rock, you can fill in bare spots with pea gravel.

















# Optional Rain Garden

- A great option for the end of a creek bed.
- An depression, 6- to 9-inch-deep, filled with plants that can tolerate occasional flooding.
- During heavy rains, water collects in the garden and filters into the ground.

