In our “feast or famine” summers, saving water in the landscape can be approached in two ways. One is to capture and save rainwater. The other is to plan and plant specifically for dryer soils, so that irrigation isn’t needed. This spring has seen a bountiful supply of water. For many that meant flooding and it’s hard to even imagine the possibility of drought in August.

Capturing and reusing rainwater as needed is fairly simple. Rain barrels, rain gardens, small retention areas and redirecting sump pump discharge hoses or downspouts can be either large or small scale fixes, according to space available. Also available is a rain diverter, which attaches to your downspout and allows you to completely bypass the water collection system. You can either direct water into the rain barrel by simply flipping an arm down, or also available is a rain diverter, which attaches to your downspout and allows you to completely bypass the water collection system. You can either direct water into the rain barrel by simply flipping an arm down, or bypass the water collection system altogether by flipping it up.

The handy gardener can make a rain barrel at home. Directions can be found through a library search or online. To be on the safe side, use only new barrels or cleaned secondhand barrels formerly used to store edibles such as vinegar.

Rain gardens take advantage of low spots already near a downspout or sump pump discharge, or an artificial low spot can be created. The low spot can be backfilled with coarse stone, liquid containers, features drain at the bottom with garden hose threads, removable screen linkage kit. Water storage plants that thrive in wet climates.
conditions. An excellent source of free information for building your own rain garden is the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.

An often-overlooked source of free, fresh water for irrigation is the discharge from the foundation sump pump. Lightweight, corrugated plastic pipe is available in diameters of 3 or 4 inches. Six-foot long sections snap together without tools. Just slide one end of a corrugated pipe over the discharge outlet and add or remove sections to reach planting beds or lawn areas in rotation.

Xeriscaping is a term coined by a Colorado water task force, born out of a severe drought in 1977. Xeri- is a prefix meaning “dry”, and -scaping implies deliberate design. Xeriscaping is a more or less opposite approach to the usual way of gardening in the Chicago area. Instead of enhancing moisture in the soil and building in sprinkler or irrigation systems, Xeriscaping actually promotes dryness. Crushed stone is often added to planting beds to enhance drainage. Drought-loving plants are selected and once established require little irrigation. In fact, the bane of drought-loving plants is a cold wet winter or spring.

For an informal Xeriphytic landscape, think mountain meadow flowers. Every year in late fall or very early spring we scatter drought-tolerant seed collections in a corner of the yard that is dry and sunny year round.

Free, fresh water for irrigation is usual way of gardening in the California poppies, red flax, meadow pinks and bachelor's buttons are just some of the flowers that do well here. Some available in diameters of 3 or 4 and building in sprinkler or self-sow each year and every inches. Six-foot long sections irrigation systems, Xeriscaping summer brings a joyful mini-snap together without tools. Just slide one end of a corrugated pipe over the discharge outlet to plants to enhance drain- and add or remove sections to plant age. Drought-loving plants are reach planting beds or lawn selected and once established areas in rotation.

require little irrigation. In fact, the bane of drought-loving plants is a cold wet winter or spring.