

Turn a Ravine into a Dry Creek

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Planning an attractive landscape that has a gully with water rushing through it with each rainstorm can be a little tricky. Treating this low area with the standard methods of planting, trimming and mowing are not very successful. Rushing water that flows periodically can destroy even the best of intentions. Flowerbeds are all but washed away. Grass is drowned and becomes thin. Even worse, your valuable topsoil ends up in your neighbor's yard!

Homeowners who are blessed with this miniature ravine are tempted to bring in the heavy equipment, push soil around and level things up a bit. This is not advisable as you may damage existing trees and the neighbors will not appreciate the newly directed water in their yard. One solution to this messy problem is to be creative in your landscape design and try a dry creek.

A dry creek is one that handles excess runoff periodically, unlike a wet creek that has water at all times. First dig it out a bit to sculpt a more desirable shape and size. Line it with flat or rounded river stones. The stones add beauty and will slow the running water.

Build up the sides with stacked stones or natural fieldstones to create deeper sides. Backfill behind these stones and then level the approach to the creek so beds can be installed effectively. This creates the effect of a beautiful creek bed even if it is seldom wet.

Planting along your creek bed is important in creating that final picture of serenity. Create a woodland setting with native plants and ferns that will grow along the

edges. Some plants may creep into the creek bed for a truly natural effect. As your stones age and become mossy, and as plantings begin to drape the sides, your dry creek will surely garner the praise of fellow gardeners and be worth your time and effort.