

Lamorinda

OUR HOMES

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The Real Estate Quarter in Review ... read on Page OH4

Digging Deep with Goddess Gardener, Cynthia Brian

Rock solid

By Cynthia Brian



Succulents thrive tucked into crevices in rocks. Photos Cynthia Brian

"River stones remain, while water flows away." ~ Romanian Proverb

Growing up on the farm, our home was surrounded on three sides by hills and a creek that flowed year-round. In the spring we enjoyed the emergence of pollywogs and watched them mature into frogs. In summer we hung ropes over the oaks to swing into the deeper pools. Knowing that winter storms would erode the banks, fall was the time to work in tandem with Mother Nature reinforcing the rock formations to ensure the stability of the land.

I still live surrounded by hills

and creeks. River rocks allow the rainwater to flow smoothly and sustainably during winter months while maintaining appealing dry creek beds in summer. By adding terracing and retaining walls, I've managed to reduce hillside run-off.

Recently I visited the garden of Victor R. whose home is backed by a running creek. After removing several decaying pine trees with deep roots that were holding the soil, he realized that his creek needed reinforcement. Rocks and stones are effective ways to buttress the banks of creeks, riverbeds, and hillsides, and Victor utilized them.



Riprapping with rocks keeps this stream from eroding the soil.

His rock retaining walls are enhanced with meandering paths, fruit trees, statuary, and flowering plants that provide erosion control and flood prevention.

If your property is flanked by a creek or resides on a hillside, there are various methods to make your landscape rock solid.

Riprapping: A common erosion control technique is called riprap which entails placing large rocks and stones along the banks. The rocks absorb and deflect the energy of the flowing water, reducing erosion.

Gabions: Wire mesh boxes or bas-

kets are filled with stones to stabilize slopes and creek banks as the water flows through them reducing flooding.

Terracing: On steep slopes, using rocks and stones for terracing reduces soil loss.

Retaining Walls: To prevent mudslides and flooding, retaining walls made of rocks are beautiful as well as effective.

Rock Gardens: Adding well-placed boulders in a garden creates an aesthetically pleasing landscape while also retaining soil stability.

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