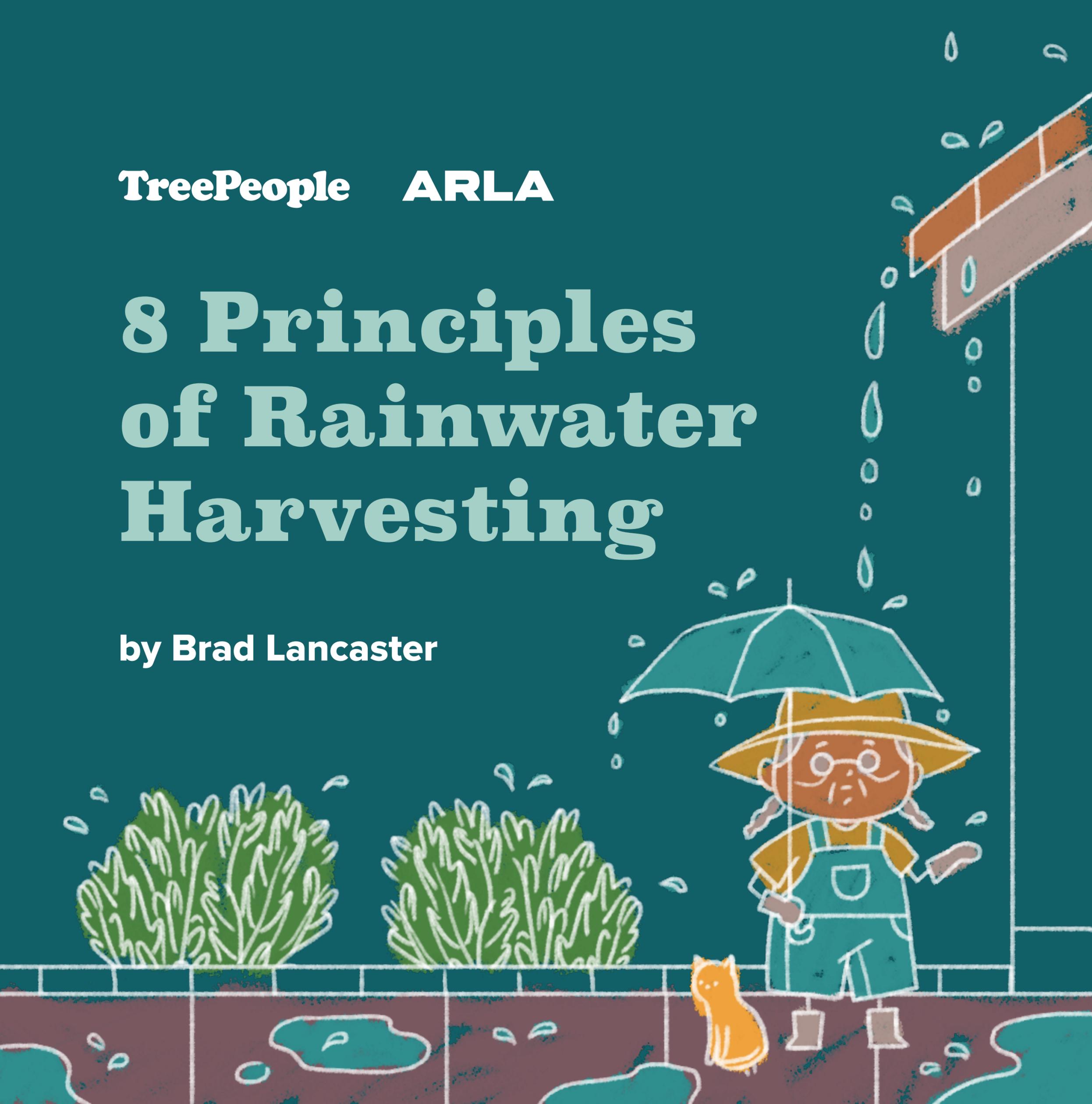


TreePeople ARLA

8 Principles of Rainwater Harvesting

by Brad Lancaster



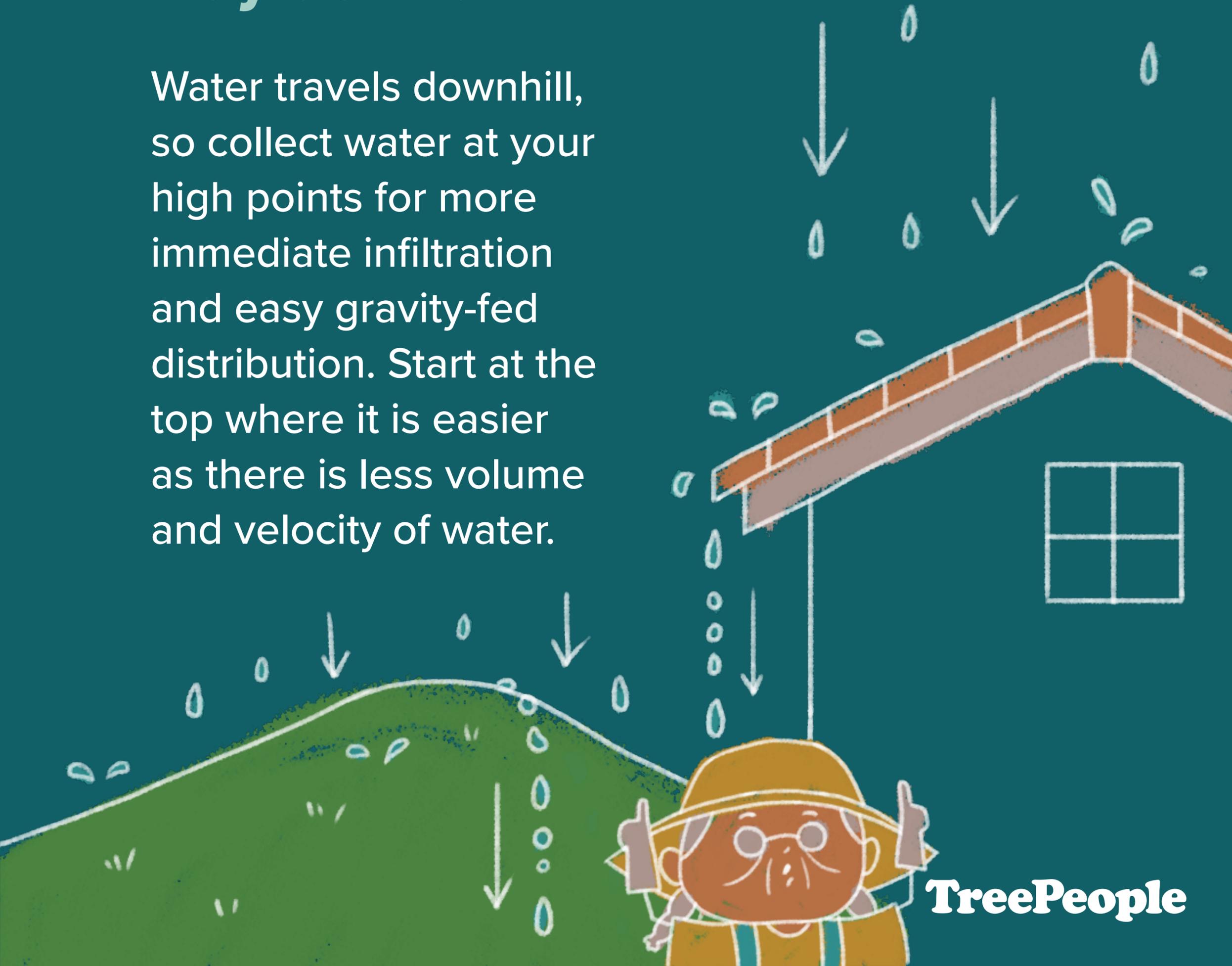
1 Begin with long and thoughtful observations.

Use all your senses to see where the water (and the sediment it carries) flows and how. What is working, what is not? Build on what works. Consider how you might help fix that which is not working.



2 Start at the top (highpoint) of your watershed and work your way down.

Water travels downhill, so collect water at your high points for more immediate infiltration and easy gravity-fed distribution. Start at the top where it is easier as there is less volume and velocity of water.



TreePeople

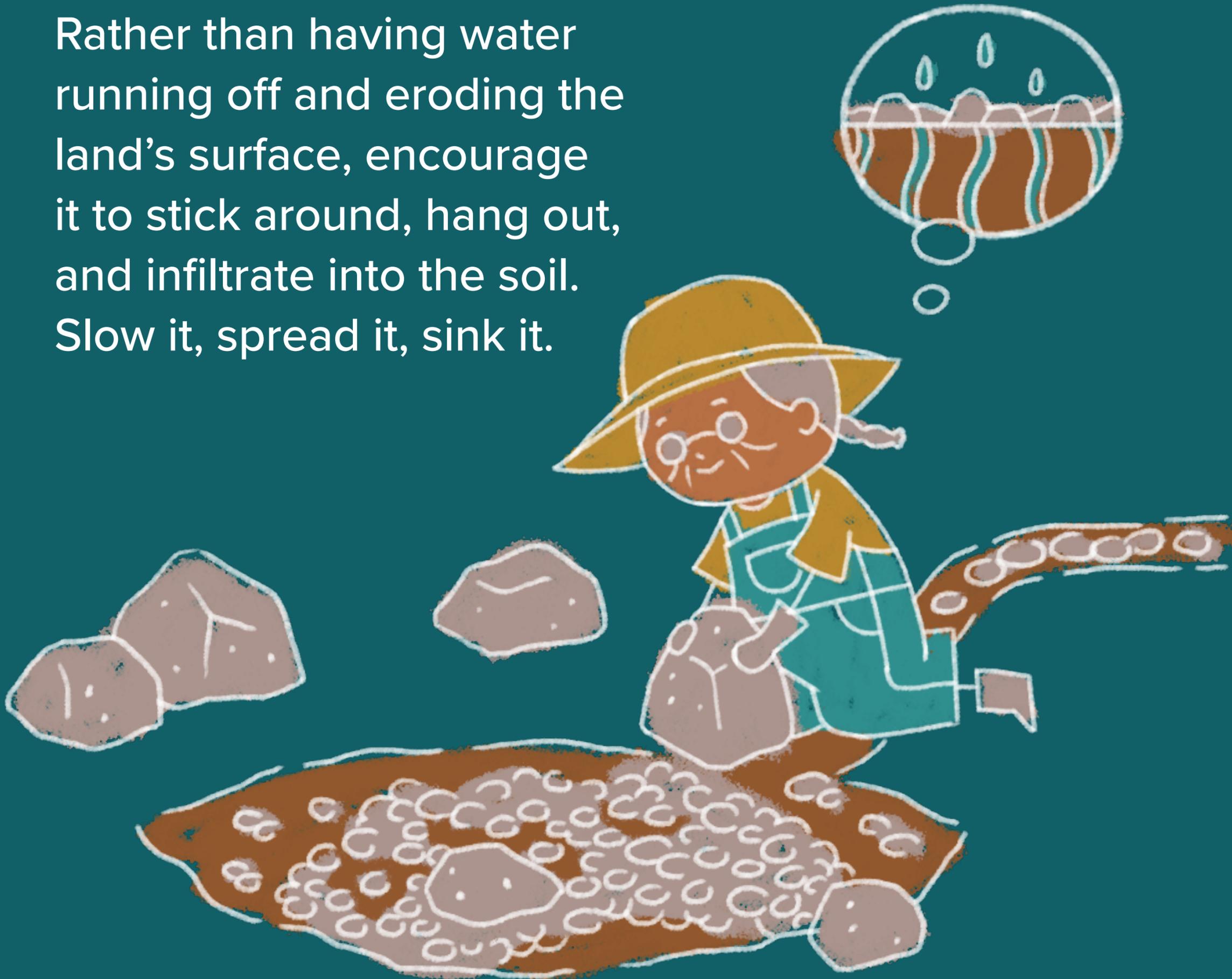
3 Start small and simple.

Work at the human scale so you can build and repair everything. Many small strategies are far more effective than one big one when you are trying to infiltrate water into the soil.



4 Slow, spread, and infiltrate the flow of water.

Rather than having water running off and eroding the land's surface, encourage it to stick around, hang out, and infiltrate into the soil. Slow it, spread it, sink it.



5 Always plan an overflow route, and manage that overflow as a resource.

Always have an overflow route for the water in times of extra heavy rains, and where possible, use the overflow as a resource.



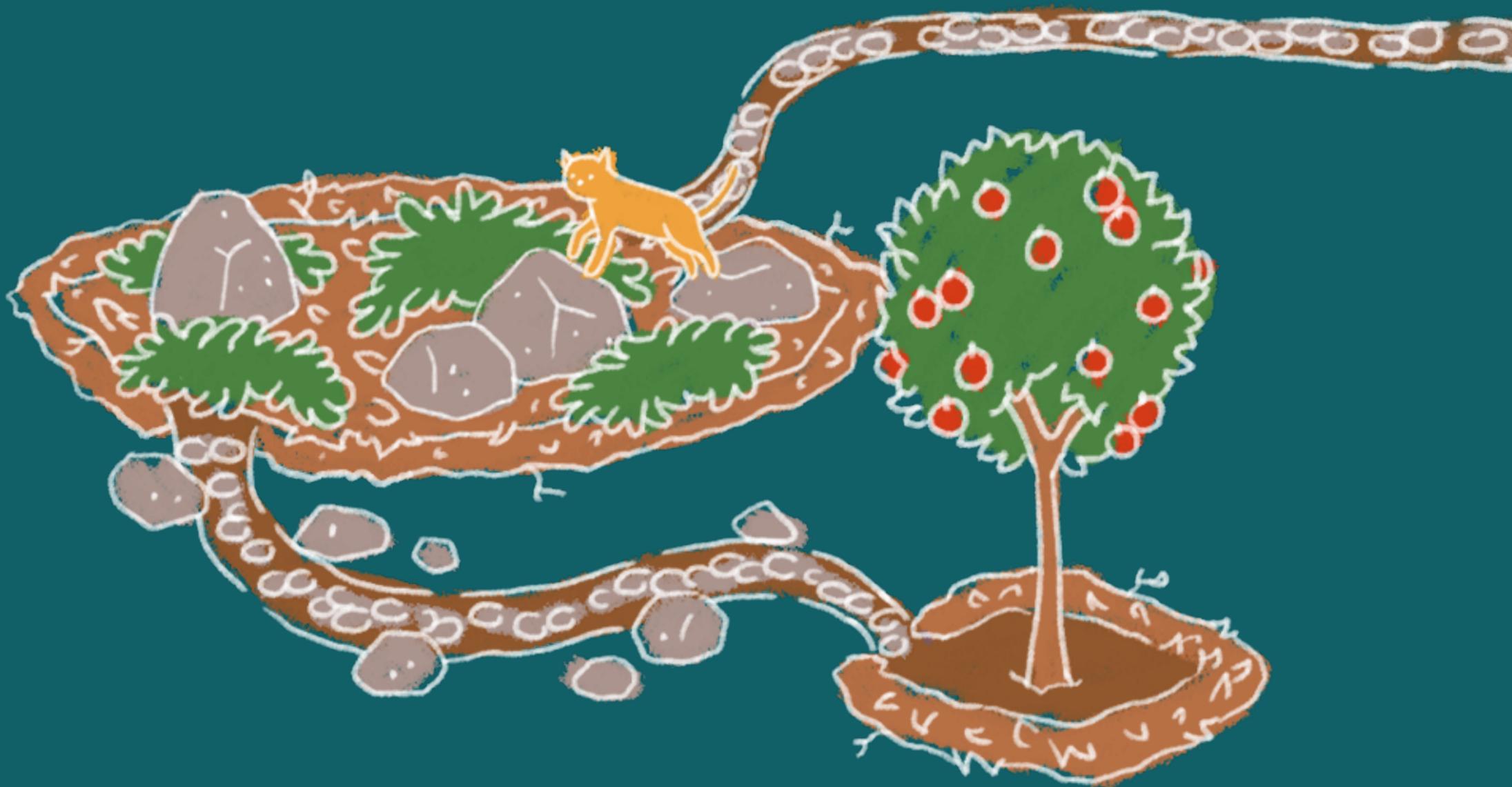
6 Maximize living and organic groundcover.

Create a living sponge so the harvested water is used to grow more resources, while the soil's ability to infiltrate and hold water steadily improves.



7 Maximize beneficial relationships and efficiency by “stacking functions.”

Get your water harvesting strategies to do more than hold water. Berms can double as high-and-dry raised paths. Plantings can be placed to cool buildings in summer. Vegetation can be selected to provide food.



8 Continually reassess your system: the “feedback loop.”

Observe how your work affects the site, beginning again with the first principle. Make any needed changes, using the principles to guide you.



Reproduced with permission from
Rainwater Harvesting for Drylands
and Beyond by Brad Lancaster,
www.HarvestingRainwater.com

For more information about rainwater
harvesting including how-to's, videos, and
other resources, visit treepeople.org/water

Support generously provided by ARLA.

TreePeople **ARLA**

