Stonework can be a creative and beautiful addition to any landscape. Stonework has as many uses as you have imagination, but it’s greatest benefit is that of longevity. Properly installed, stone and masonry is a good investment that will be there for generations to come. In fact, it often gets more beautiful with age. In addition to brick, concrete and natural stone, we now have manufactured stone and a large variety of preshaped concrete wall and paver products from which to choose.

Stonework is attractive. But it also has other advantages over traditional concrete walkways. In two recent projects, for example, we didn’t use mortar between the stones. Instead, in the separation between the stones, we allow grass, moss, or other groundcovers to take the place of mortar. This enables rainfall to be absorbed, reducing the amount of stormwater runoff created when solid impervious surfaces are used.

In one of the projects we created a relatively inexpensive walkway using a 2’ x 2’ concrete form and premixed bags of concrete. The walkway serves as a division between the landscape bed and the lawn, providing an attractive pathway through the garden. In another project, large pieces of Tennessee blue stone were used to create a graceful walkway through the lawn. Stone set in mortar was used to separate the lawn from the gravel driveway. The border holds the gravel in place, and creates definition in the landscape. The gravel driveway also allows penetration of rainwater, thus reducing the amount of stormwater runoff from the property.

Other Florida-Friendly uses for stone may include using stacked stone walls and planters to redirect the flow of water on your property. You can also create retaining walls to help with erosion or terrace a
slope. You may even choose to create a dry creek bed in an area where the water naturally flows across your property during heavy rains. All of these options can be mixed with groundcovers, grasses and other plants to beautify your landscape and address the flow of stormwater on your property at the same time.

Brick or stone can also be used to create courtyards and outdoor fire places or fire pits. We used brick and mortar to create a raised bed for roses and a focal point in one landscape. Raised beds have many functions. They allow you to create a special planting mix of soil, often improving drainage. You can also reduce the amount of bending it takes to weed, prune and care for your plants. And if you are a pet lover, the raised bed will help dissuade your dogs from traveling through your flower bed.

All stonework depends on having a good foundation. Hire an experienced contractor with good references who will lay the proper footings and foundation for your stonework. If you are considering doing the work yourself, take the time to learn about and install the proper foundation materials that will remain level and stable over time. Taking the proper steps with installation will insure the success of your labors and a lasting result.

####