

## Reduce stormwater runoff by capturing rain where it falls!

**WATER: Too  
Precious to Waste**

Photo by Judy Schneider



## Start by "unpaving" your town.

As **stormwater runoff** flows over parking lots, lawns and driveways, it picks up **dog waste, oil** and **gasoline, fertilizers**, and even **toxic chemicals**, carrying them along streets and into municipal storm drains. Most people believe that the runoff in storm drains is sent to a treatment plant before it flows into local waterways, but it is not. This polluted stormwater runoff can close beaches and shellfishing beds, kill fish, and cause harmful algae growth.

What you can do:

- Support your town's efforts to clean storm drains, keep streets clean, and build an effective stormwater infrastructure.
- Encourage the use of low-impact development principles, which include creating fewer impervious surfaces, using alternative materials like permeable pavers and porous asphalt, and constructing rain gardens and natural drainage swales.

**Impervious surfaces** impact our water quality! In watershed areas with 12-20% impervious surface, water quality is considered "threatened"; and at levels above 20% water quality is considered "non-supporting" of healthy stream habitats. What about your town? Many parts of suburban towns are above the 20% level.

\* In Massachusetts, **stormwater runoff** from paved surfaces is the **number one source of pollutants** that degrade our rivers, streams, lakes, ponds and wetlands. If allowed to infiltrate into the ground, stormwater could be a valuable resource that would recharge our groundwater and replenish our streamflows. \*

Here are some techniques you can do around your property to avoid runoff and encourage recharge:

**Install a rain barrel:** Rain barrels, easily filled by rain from your roof, capture water for use on sunny days. Paired with an optional soaker hose, rain barrels can efficiently supply water for gardens and plants.

**Build a rain garden:** Rain gardens capture storm water and allow it to percolate into the ground. Easy to build, they are essentially depressions, often filled with a layer of gravel and sandy soils.

**Use permeable pavers and porous asphalt** when building driveways, patios, or sidewalks. These pervious products make a big difference over their impervious counterparts in reducing stormwater runoff.



**Add compost to your soil and aerate your yard:** Both of these actions will reduce soil compaction – a big problem caused by overuse of synthetic lawn care products and today's construction methods that disturb topsoils.

**Restore and conserve natural areas:** Native trees and shrubs are the most efficient water recyclers of all because their deep roots allow water to trickle into the ground more easily than hard packed grass. Added benefits are that they tend to be drought resistant and are important food sources for native birds and wildlife. They also store water and provide shade and cooling on hot summer days.



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