

# Rain Barrels

Rain barrels collect and store rainwater from your roof through your gutter downspout. They reduce runoff and soil erosion on your property and the water can be used for irrigation instead of being wasted!

Contact your local Soil and Water Conservation District for more information.



## When It Rains, It Drains

Always remember to...

- Clean up after your pet
- Use fertilizers and pesticides sparingly
- Check your vehicle for leaks
- Never dump anything down a storm drain!

## Additional Resources

Local Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD)

<http://www.in.gov/isda/2368.htm>

Indianapolis Office of Sustainability

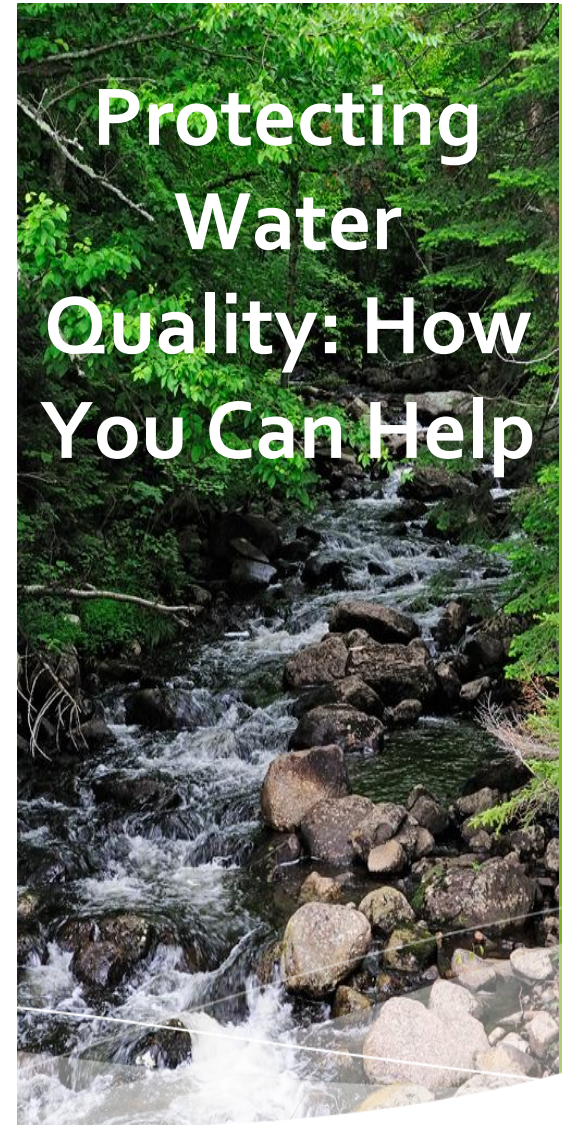
<http://www.indy.gov/eGov/City/DPW/SustainIndy/Pages/SustainIndyHome.aspx>

Local Watershed Groups

<http://cfpub.epa.gov/surf/state.cfm?statepostal=IN>

*This brochure was created by 2015 Indiana Watershed Leadership Academy participants Jake Brinkman, Aileen Driscoll Farid, and Jennifer Hughes as a way to promote water quality in Indiana watersheds.*

# Protecting Water Quality: How You Can Help



## Residential Best Management Practices



## Porous Pavement



## Rain Gardens

Rain Gardens are planted, shallow depressions that absorb rainwater and filter out pollutants from runoff. They are often lined with a layer of gravel and the soil can be amended with sand to help facilitate drainage.

**Use native plants** - Because they have adapted to the local climate, native plants are more drought-tolerant and easier to maintain. They also provide food and cover for wildlife while attracting beneficial pollinators like bees and butterflies.

## Filter Strips

Filter strips are areas of land with grasses or other vegetation that slow the flow of stormwater runoff. They encourage runoff to soak into the ground and capture sediment as well. These buffers are especially important near storm drains and waterways where runoff could flow directly into ponds or streams.

Do parts of your yard flood when it rains? Is rainwater from your downspout causing soil erosion on your lawn? Have you ever thought about what you could do with all the water that drains from your roof and gutters? Are you concerned about water quality or pollution in your watershed?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, then you might consider some of the following Best Management Practices (BMPs) that could fix water problems in your yard and improve water quality in your watershed. There is a BMP that fits any budget and this brochure highlights some effective ways to reduce stormwater runoff on your property while helping to protect local water resources.

### **Why is stormwater runoff a problem?**

In a natural environment like a forest or prairie, rainwater soaks into the ground and moves slowly through the landscape. In urban areas, impervious surfaces like roofs, driveways, and compacted lawn soils allow runoff to flow into storm drains or nearby waterways, carrying pollutants like sediment, nutrients, and bacteria with it. The EPA views stormwater runoff as the #1 threat to water quality in lakes and streams.

Porous pavement is a permeable surface that can be used in sidewalks, driveways, and streets. A layer of stone underneath the pavers allows for infiltration of runoff. This captures sediment and other pollutants like oil, grease, and nutrients.

## Yard Maintenance

There are several things you can do around your yard to limit runoff and prevent erosion. They are low cost and require minimal effort.

- Pick up after your pet (reduces nutrient loads)
- Rake your leaves and lawn clippings (this keeps them out of storm drains and waterways)
- Don't use more fertilizer than directed (reduces nutrient loads)
- Mulching (conserves water, suppresses weed growth, and prevents soil erosion)
- Plant trees and native vegetation (slows runoff and increases infiltration)