

# What is Save the Rain?

Save the Rain is Onondaga County's program to improve the environment and help Onondaga Lake by reducing the amount of stormwater runoff that flows directly into our sewer system.

In some areas, during rain and snowmelt events, runoff flows into storm drains that connect to the sewer system. This can sometime result in overflow, which can overload the sewers and send polluted stormwater into Onondaga Lake.

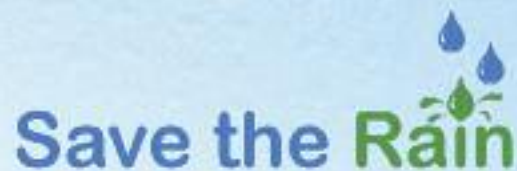
The County's Department of Water Environment Protection will lead efforts to save the rain by developing green infrastructure and environmentally-friendly solutions to capture stormwater where it lands to prevent it from entering the sewer system.

This brochure is an informational guide to help you, the homeowner, think about ways you can "Save the Rain" and prevent it from flowing into sanitary sewer and storm drains. Stormwater runoff can carry pollutants such as: leaves, soil, lawn debris, fertilizers, pesticides, motor oil, antifreeze, grease and other chemicals into sanitary sewer and storm drains. You can make a difference. Homeowners can take several easy steps to reduce stormwater runoff. Every drop counts, and with your help we can keep Onondaga Lake clean!

[www.ongov.net/savetherain](http://www.ongov.net/savetherain)

## Learn more

More detailed information and instructions on these, and other ideas to Save the Rain can be found at [www.ongov.net/savetherain](http://www.ongov.net/savetherain)



**For more information,  
please call or write to:**

**Onondaga County Department of  
Water Environment Protection**

**650 Hiawatha Boulevard West  
Syracuse, New York 13204**

**Telephone: (315) 435-2260**

**Joanne M. Mahoney, County Executive  
Ongov.net**



It takes  
a community to  
Save the Rain

What *homeowners*  
can do **to help**



## What is green infrastructure?

Green infrastructure is a sustainable and environmentally friendly solution for capturing stormwater runoff. The use of these natural or engineered systems enhance overall environmental quality.

## Why is green infrastructure so important?

Stormwater runoff can have a dramatic impact on the environment. During times of heavy rain or melting snow, sewers can overflow and discharge a combination of runoff and sanitary sewage called a *Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO)* into Onondaga Creek and Harbor Brook. This overflow eventually flows into Onondaga Lake. A *combined sewer overflow* system is designed to overflow in this way to prevent sewage from backing up into streets and basements.

Green infrastructure strategies provide environmentally friendly sustainable solutions for capturing rainwater where it lands. Green infrastructure solutions can reduce the amount of stormwater entering the sewer system which will lead to improved water quality of Onondaga Lake and its tributaries.



## What you can do to help Save the Rain

Homeowners can take several steps to prevent stormwater runoff. Here are 5 easy ways you can prevent runoff at your home:

**Use a leaf bag** – Collect leaves and other yard debris and place them into leaf bags. This will prevent leaves and other debris from being blown or carried into nearby storm drains. Leaves and debris can clog sewer drains and cause an overflow.

**Make your property a sustainable one** – Diverting your gutters into a garden or planting trees around your property are easy ways to absorb stormwater naturally. Consider using porous surfaces for sidewalks, driveways or walkways on your property. These types of surfaces allow stormwater to seep into the ground.

**Connect a rain barrel** – Rain barrels are easy ways to capture and recycle stormwater. Connect the rain barrel to your gutter system and reuse the water for your garden, to water plants or wash your car.

**Use and dispose of chemical products properly** – Anytime you use gasoline, paint, motor oil, fertilizer, pesticides or any other chemicals, **DO NOT** dispose of them by pouring them down your toilet, household or storm drains. These materials could end up in the Lake or its tributaries. Contact the Onondaga County Resource and Recovery Agency for instructions on disposal of these products.

**Get Involved** – learn more about stormwater runoff and ways you can help reduce pollution.

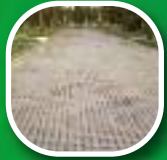
## Green Solutions

There are several examples of green infrastructure solutions. Below are the most common and effective green infrastructure applications for homeowners:



**Rain barrel** is a water tank which is used to collect and store rain water, typically from rooftops via rain gutters.

**Porous pavement** is porous asphalt, concrete, paving stones or bricks that allow precipitation to infiltrate through to the soil below.



**Rain garden** is a sunken garden designed to absorb rainwater from impervious areas such as roofs, driveways, walkways, and compacted lawn areas. Rain gardens reduce runoff by allowing stormwater to soak into the ground, as opposed to flowing into storm drains and surface waters, which can cause erosion, water pollution, flooding, and diminished groundwater.



**Tree planting** is a great way to catch stormwater where it lands. Trees soak up water naturally and prevent runoff from flowing to sewer systems.

