

Best Management Practices to Minimize Soil Erosion

Buffer it. Try to catch soil before it reaches the road or the water. Plant shrubs and trees to create a buffer between your property and the water to filter out pollutants. You can divert the water running off driveways, roads, and gardens into a stable vegetated area where the dirt can get trapped. The best idea is to plant a ribbon of trees and shrubs, referred to as a vegetated buffer, downslope of places like your home to capture soil and pollutants before they reach a roadway or waterway.

Cover your bald spots. This is especially important on slopes and at the waters' edge. Seed and mulch any bare soil on your land as quickly as possible with an appropriate vegetative cover, such as sod or seed. Be sure to mulch the area with straw or other appropriate cover to prevent erosion until the seeds germinate. Keeping soil undercover - covered by grass, shrubs and trees - means the rain doesn't have a chance to get at it and move it. If you've got erosion issues near your home – along a roof edge or near a downspout – consider installing an infiltration or drip line trench and dry wells. For fact sheets with detailed instructions, diagrams and color photos about installation and maintenance, visit <http://www.maine.gov/dep/blwq/docwatershed/materials.htm>.

Less is more. Minimize disturbance to ground cover when doing any type of land clearing work. Avoid mass-grading large areas, which will allow more disturbed soil to be exposed and vulnerable to erosion from runoff after it rains or when snow melts. At the waterfront, leave as many aquatic plants in place as possible—they will hold bottom sediments in place and protect the shoreline from the erosive forces of wind and ice action.

Grab it. Rain barrels provide an innovative way to capture rainwater from your roof, and store it for later use. Water collected from rain barrels can be used to water lawns, gardens, and indoor plants. You can lower your water bill, conserve well water in the dry season, and reduce erosion and polluted runoff.

Keep it legal. Obtain required permits and install necessary soil erosion controls. Any earth-changing activity that will impact more than one acre of land, or is within 500 feet of a lake, stream, or wetland requires a soil erosion control permit. For more information on Maine's Erosion and Sedimentation Control law, visit: <http://www.maine.gov/dep/blwq/docstand/stormwater/erosion.htm>.

Don't be stumped. Incorporate large woody debris, such as stumps, logs, and tree trunks, as a management option for stream banks and shorelines. Woody debris provides essential aquatic habitat and stabilizes shorelines and stream banks from erosion.

Mulch it. Spread mulch, such as compost, wood chips, shredded leaves, or shredded bark around trees and plants. Mulch helps to retain moisture in the soil

by reducing evaporation. It also cuts down on weeds and moderates the temperature of the soil.