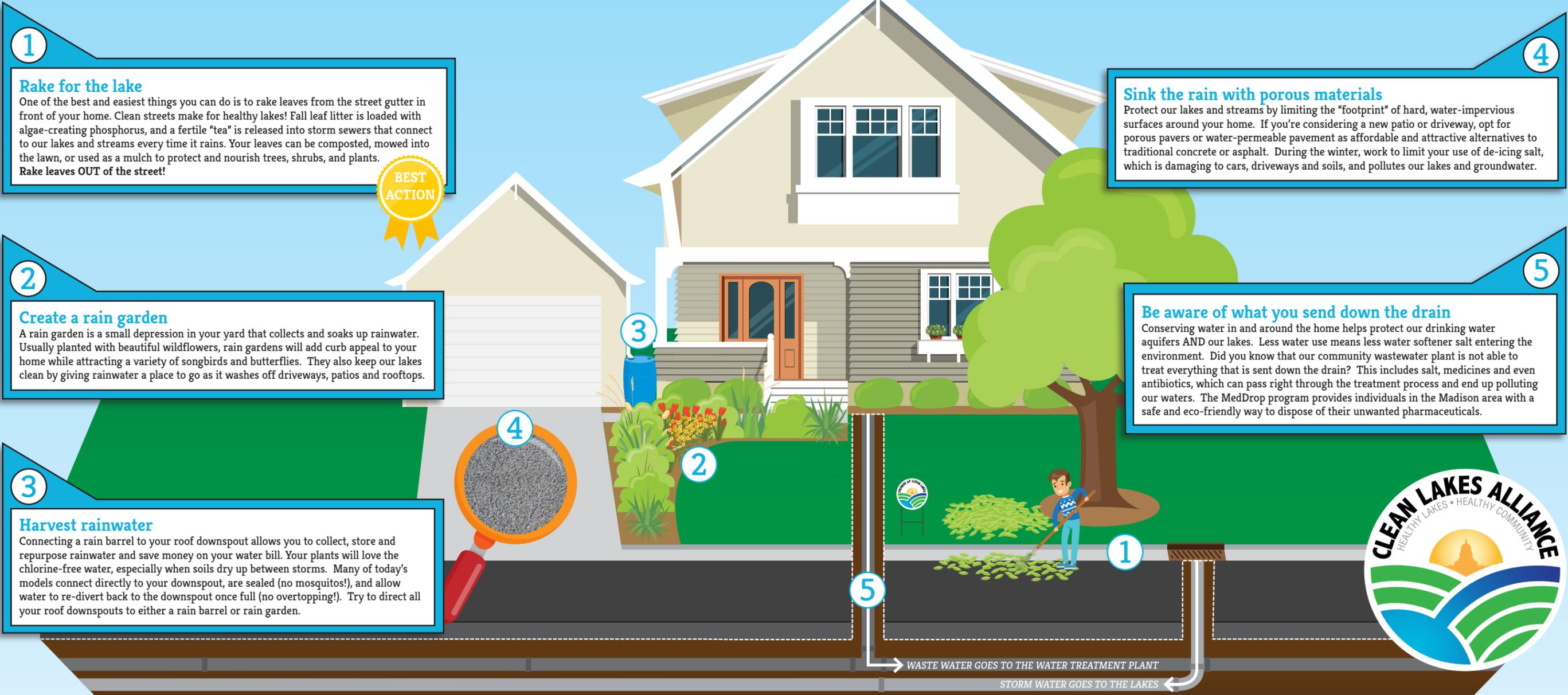


# 5 At-Home Actions for Healthy Lakes

We all live and work in a watershed. That means that **our homes and yards impact our nearest lakes and streams**. Here are 5 actions that YOU can take to help keep our lakes healthy.



**1**

**Rake for the lake**

One of the best and easiest things you can do is to rake leaves from the street gutter in front of your home. Clean streets make for healthy lakes! Fall leaf litter is loaded with algae-creating phosphorus, and a fertile "tea" is released into storm sewers that connect to our lakes and streams every time it rains. Your leaves can be composted, mowed into the lawn, or used as a mulch to protect and nourish trees, shrubs, and plants.  
**Rake leaves OUT of the street!**

**BEST ACTION**

**2**

**Create a rain garden**

A rain garden is a small depression in your yard that collects and soaks up rainwater. Usually planted with beautiful wildflowers, rain gardens will add curb appeal to your home while attracting a variety of songbirds and butterflies. They also keep our lakes clean by giving rainwater a place to go as it washes off driveways, patios and rooftops.

**3**

**Harvest rainwater**

Connecting a rain barrel to your roof downspout allows you to collect, store and repurpose rainwater and save money on your water bill. Your plants will love the chlorine-free water, especially when soils dry up between storms. Many of today's models connect directly to your downspout, are sealed (no mosquitos!), and allow water to re-divert back to the downspout once full (no overtopping!). Try to direct all your roof downspouts to either a rain barrel or rain garden.

**4**

**Sink the rain with porous materials**

Protect our lakes and streams by limiting the "footprint" of hard, water-impervious surfaces around your home. If you're considering a new patio or driveway, opt for porous pavers or water-permeable pavement as affordable and attractive alternatives to traditional concrete or asphalt. During the winter, work to limit your use of de-icing salt, which is damaging to cars, driveways and soils, and pollutes our lakes and groundwater.

**5**

**Be aware of what you send down the drain**

Conserving water in and around the home helps protect our drinking water aquifers AND our lakes. Less water use means less water softener salt entering the environment. Did you know that our community wastewater plant is not able to treat everything that is sent down the drain? This includes salt, medicines and even antibiotics, which can pass right through the treatment process and end up polluting our waters. The MedDrop program provides individuals in the Madison area with a safe and eco-friendly way to dispose of their unwanted pharmaceuticals.



For more information, please visit [cleanlakesalliance.org/resources](https://cleanlakesalliance.org/resources)