Reduce soil erosion. Keep it planted and mulched.

Soil erosion is a concern not only for its impacts on plant growth, but also for its impacts to water quality.

Soil is a valuable natural resource that nourishes and supports plant growth. When soil is left bare and exposed, it can erode by both wind and water. In addition to the loss of the valuable soil resource, wind erosion can impact air quality and water erosion can result in gullies or “washed out” channels and sedimentation to down-slope areas.

Sediments that are transported to storm drains and surface waters can choke aquatic life and increase water temperatures. Various pollutants such as phosphorus and heavy metals may also be attached to these sediments and impact water quality.

You can stabilize the soil by:

- Maintaining a healthy, perennial vegetative cover.
- Mulching.
- Increasing soil organic matter.
- Cover cropping – such as winter rye in vegetable gardens. Includes annual grasses, small grains, legumes and other types of vegetation planted to an area to provide a temporary vegetative cover. Cover crops are often tilled under serving also as a “green manure” crop.
- Placing crushed stone, wood chips, and other similar materials in heavily used areas where vegetation is hard to establish and maintain.
- Other temporary erosion controls that include the use of geo-textile materials help plants get established. These are especially effective on steep slopes and heavily used areas.
- Addressing areas prone to stormwater runoff. This may include redirecting stormwater and roof runoff to areas that can settle and dissipate water, such as rain gardens or vegetated buffer areas.

This newly established perennial bed of native and sustainable shrubs and plants is protected with pine bark mulch. Wickford Cove, North Kingstown, RI. September 2003.
For more information:

URI Master Gardener Hotline:
1 (800) 448-1011 (M-Th, 9AM to 2 PM)
Call to get your gardening questions answered

RI NEMO Program
ristormwatersolutions.org
(401) 874-2138
Information on stormwater management and education

URI Home*A*Syst Program
web.uri.edu/safewater
(401) 874-5398
Information on protecting your drinking water

This side entrance is at the base of sloping areas where runoff and foot traffic combined would make it difficult to keep lawn grass healthy. Bare soil would create muddy conditions during wet periods, dusty conditions during dry periods, and be subject to erosion off site. Crushed stone protects the soil, allows for infiltration and settles runoff. The Glen, North Kingstown, RI. July 2003.