

# 10 Tips for protecting water quality

## Gardening

1. Choose native and adapted plants and grass that require minimal chemical upkeep
2. Avoid over-fertilizing and Weed and Feed products and never fertilize before a rain
3. Use pesticides as a last resort

## Chemical Spills

4. For a small spill, sprinkle with sawdust or kitty litter, seal in a trash bag and put in the trash. Do not wash into the gutter or stormdrain
5. For a large spill that could affect your creek, call the City's Pollution Hotline at 974-2550

## Car Care

6. Dispose of unwanted chemicals at the City's Household Hazardous Waste Facility (974-4343). Used oil and antifreeze can be recycled at many gas stations
7. Wash your car at a car wash or where water flows into the grass

## Pet Waste

8. Scoop the Poop into a plastic bag and dispose of it in the garbage can

## Drainage

9. Divert rooftop runoff onto grass so water can be absorbed gradually
10. Use wood decking, bricks or mulch for walkways and driveways so water can penetrate into the soil



**Watershed Protection  
Development Review**

[www.cityofaustin.org/watershed/bartonsprings.htm](http://www.cityofaustin.org/watershed/bartonsprings.htm)

For more information  
call 512-974-2550 or visit

# Take a walk...

to your Neighborhood Wetpond. Just follow the path outside of this library and learn more about how the pond is protecting our water quality



Beckett Meadows Wetpond near  
Will Hampton Branch at Oak Hill Library



# The Edwards Aquifer

## What is an Aquifer?

An aquifer is an underground layer of porous rock, sand or dirt that stores water. Austin's aquifer, the Edwards, is made up of hard limestone. Underground water has eroded honeycomb-like passageways in the stone. This honeycombed limestone is called "karst".



Karst Limestone

## Where is the Edwards Aquifer?

The three segments of the Edwards Aquifer stretch from Temple to Del Rio. Most important to Austinites is the Barton Springs segment which runs along Loop 1, south of the Colorado River. Most of the water from this segment emerges at Barton Springs in Zilker Park.



Barton Springs



Barton Springs Recharge and Contributing Zones

## How does water enter the Barton Springs segment of the aquifer?

Rainwater flows over land in the Hill Country into creeks that run east toward Austin. This is called the contributing zone since it "contributes" water to the aquifer. Here the limestone is covered with clay and soil. Millions of years ago, earthquakes shifted the rocks so that east of the contributing zone, karst limestone is found on the surface of the land. Throughout this area called the recharge zone, caves, sinkholes and faults are common. Water flows through these openings to fill or "recharge" the aquifer.

This whirlpool forms when water enters the aquifer via a cave in Onion Creek



Water travels over land to enter the aquifer through this sinkhole



Water flows through cracks and fissures in this creek bed.

## Why is the aquifer environmentally-sensitive?

In the recharge zone, the karst limestone is on the surface of the land. There is little soil to filter out pollutants. Water flows through openings in the limestone rocks into the aquifer, carrying pollutants from yards, roadways and construction sites directly into the underground water supply. The aquifer provides drinking water for more than 50,000 people on wells, a portion of Austin's drinking water, and habitat for the endangered Barton Springs Salamander.