



Soil Erosion

SOIL EROSION occurs when water washes rich topsoil away from your yard.

When this happens, you lose a nutrient-rich resource that your plants need to grow. Topsoil forms slowly over hundreds of years. It is difficult to replace once lost. Topsoil in the United States is lost ten times faster than it can be replaced naturally.

Eroded soil washing into lakes and streams clouds the water and disrupts aquatic life. Local soil is rich in phosphorus. This nutrient causes algal blooms when washed into our water.

DID YOU KNOW? In the U.S., the economic impact of soil erosion costs the nation about \$37.6 billion in productivity losses each year. (Cornell University study)



EROSION DESTROYS WATER QUALITY

- Sediment in stormwater runoff fills storm drains and streets with mud, which clogs our lakes and streams.
- The eroded soil can choke the roots of aquatic plants and hinder the ability of fish and other aquatic animals to breathe.
- Poor erosion control during the original construction of I-10 damaged Lake Jackson with sediment, costing taxpayers millions of dollars in cleanup.

EROSION DEPENDS ON TWO FACTORS

- How much and how heavily rain comes down.
- How much cover there is to protect the ground.

Trees and other plants keep heavy rains from knocking the soil loose and washing it away. Roots hold the soil in place and keep your yard at home. Bare spots in the yard show where your soil is eroding.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Direct stormwater away from unprotected bare soil.
- Protect exposed soil—use mulch to cover bare areas, and try to establish plants or groundcover there. Ask your local nursery about groundcover to plant in bare areas of your yard.
- Plant a rain garden to *slow the flow*.
- Consider creating terraces on steeply sloped areas.
- Schedule construction or major landscaping during the dry season—typically September to December in our area.

THINK ABOUT PERSONAL POLLUTION

Protecting our water quality takes effort from all of us.

For more information call 850-891-6860 or visit

www.TAPPwater.org

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