



SOIL EROSION

Soil Erosion occurs when water or wind washes soil from your yard.

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

Soil erosion also reduces the ability of soil to store water and support plant growth, thereby reducing its ability to support biodiversity. Eroded soil washing into lakes and streams clouds the water and disrupts aquatic life. Local soil is rich in phosphorus. This nutrient contributes to algal blooms when washed into our surface waters.

DID YOU KNOW?

In the U.S., the economic impact of soil erosion costs the nation about \$44 billion in productivity losses each year. (World Resources Institute, 2020)



Erosion Harms Water Quality

- Eroded soil carries excess nutrients into waterbodies. Large amounts of sediment lead to the need for increased maintenance on of our stormwater systems.
- 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.



Erosion Depends on Two Factors

1. **How much and how heavily rain comes down.**
2. **The type and amount of 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 amend the soil 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.
- Always use sediment and erosion control materials during construction and post-construction until the ground cover is established.
- Schedule construction or major landscaping during the dry season - typically late fall (October/November) to late spring (April/May) in our area.

THINK ABOUT PERSONAL POLLUTION

**Protecting our water quality takes effort from all of us together.
For more information visit Tappwater.org or call 850-891-6860.**

