



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Soil  
Conservation  
Service

Columbia,  
Missouri



## Urban Conservation Tips



# Draining Wet Areas

### Description

The expression "drainage problems" is used collectively to categorize conditions such as floods, springs and seeps, puddles and wet basements. These problems usually are caused by heavy rains. However, they may be associated with soil permeability and its ability to effectively convey water through the subsurface or on the surface of the soil. Drainage problems should be considered to be both soil related and water related.

It is easy to determine that a drainage problem exists. Flooding, a soggy area in a lawn and a wet basement are all examples of drainage problems. The causes of these problems, however, may be difficult to detect.

They could be the result of a surface moisture condition, a subsurface moisture condition or both. To correct a poor drainage situation, both the characteristics

of the problem and the source of the problem must be known.

Surface drainage problems are easily identified by water that stays on the surface of the land in depressions or does not run off in a timely manner.

Leaking water lines, sewer lines and overloaded septic leach fields have been identified as sources of subsurface drainage problems in urban areas.

### Applicable Practices

#### Subsurface

Underground drain pipes  
Foundation drain

#### Surface

Waterways and lined channels  
Diversion  
Drop inlet

### Maintenance

Maintenance of drainage systems should include periodic inspection of all components. Some components are the responsibility of individual landowners.

Examples are maintaining the sod in water channels on their property and making sure that drain pipes are open and not damaged. Major storm sewer inspection and repairs normally are made by the municipality or local homeowners' association. Arrangements should be made to see that damage to components is repaired in a timely manner and that all drainageways are kept free of sediment and debris.

### Where To Get Help

For more information about urban drainage, contact your local Soil Conservation Service office. It is listed in the telephone directory under "U.S. Government, Department of Agriculture."



