



## Earth Gauge: Driveway drips affect water quality

Frank Macek ■ Updated: 5/17/2010 8:30:26 PM Posted: 5/17/2010 8:21:03 PM

Residential driveways can account for up to 15 percent of the total paved area in a city or state.

These paved surfaces are "hot spots" for accumulation of pollutants like motor oil, antifreeze and yard care chemicals.

During a storm, rain water picks up pollutants from paved areas and heads to the storm drain, which often directs the water straight to our neighborhood streams and rivers without treatment. Too many pollutants in our water bodies can impact wildlife, fish and even drinking water quality.

### Viewer Tip:

There are easy ways to help protect water quality in your community.

*Low cost:* Keep your driveway free of pollutants and chemicals by fixing car leaks. If fertilizers or other yard care treatments spill onto the driveway, sweep them back onto the lawn or garden. Never use a hose to clean your driveway - the water will act just like a rain storm, carrying pollutants away to the storm drain.

*Long-term investment:* If you are replacing a driveway or walkway, consider using permeable pavements. There are many materials available that allow rain water to soak through to the soil rather than running off to the storm drain.

For some examples, check out <http://nemo.uconn.edu/tools/stormwater/pavements.htm>

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