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## *The Driveway's Not The End Of The Road:*

PERMEABLE ALTERNATIVES MINIMIZE RUNOFF FROM HARD SURFACES

*(from the September 19th issue of The Isthmus)*

**MADISON, WI** — Most of us don't think much about our driveways until they're buried under a half foot of snow. But traditional driveways, along with sidewalks and patios — hard surfaces (or hardscaping) that we harbor in our yards — are impermeable. They don't absorb water when it comes down in warmer weather as rain.

That's a lot of water rushing away from your own yard and down the storm drain. Rain gardens have become a popular strategy for absorbing some runoff, but you can't drive on a rain garden.

Various hardscape alternatives for driveways, paths and patios are entering the mainstream, sometimes with high-tech new materials, but also utilizing elements as old-fashioned as gravel. And speaking of fashion — new options for hardscaping are more attractive than standard asphalt, too.

Permeable (or pervious) hardscaping is really an old, simple concept that's making a comeback. Remember racing your bicycle down a gravel drive? That was a permeable surface before permeable was hip.

Permeable surfaces have spaces for water to move through and into. Water is diverted into the ground instead of rushing into the nearest storm drain or lake. Permeable surfaces are made from natural elements like gravel and stone, so they look more integrated in their surroundings.

Another creative option is to create a path with tracks and turf. Two tracks, or strips, are installed, out of any permeable paving material, for tires to follow. In between is turf — anything green, like grasses or moss.

Bringing back these old "paving" methods, such as crushed gravel, stones and bricks, is gaining favor as we increasingly understand the harmful effects of stormwater on our lakes.

[...]Wendel Chamberlin was intrigued by the old-fashioned-looking approach. His goal was to create zero stormwater runoff from his west-side home. This spring, he and his wife, Carol, had a track-like driveway installed by Masseys, a company focused on integrated landscape design. Chamberlin wanted a permeable driveway that mixed brick with grass, and his goal was 100% grass where possible.



"As an architect, I understand what it means to have zero runoff," he says. With the help of a product called Grasspave2, he achieved his goal. Grasspave2 is a plastic ring-and-grid structure installed into the ground, over a crushed gravel base, and finished with grass. As the grass grows, the Grasspave2 becomes invisible and handles the wear and tear a driveway requires with ease.

The result for the Chamberlins was a beautiful driveway that created a harmonious front yard while honoring his zero-runoff goals. And it's okay, even encouraged, to drive on the grass!

The Grasspave2 product and this particular driveway concept was new to Masseys, but Garrett Erickson, operations manager, believes this type of driveway will appeal to many, both for its esthetic appeal and permeable qualities.

*Read the rest of the article online:*

<http://www.thedailypage.com/isthmus/article.php?article=23808>

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