

# Making the most of nature's gift

The construction industry has traditionally had an irresponsible attitude to water. As urban sprawl has forced sites that may have drainage issues to be developed, the general attitude has been that shifting water to the waste water sewerage system is a perfectly reasonable means of providing new, dry homes.

Of course, the problem comes when those multitudes of new homes, shopping malls and business parks are all trying to drain away storm water at the same time; the system becomes overloaded and the environmental impact of poor water management becomes clear.

Hence, as Jim Saxton, Mid-Central Regional Manager at American Wick Drain, points out, many American construction companies are now starting to wake up to the need to manage the water on their sites rather than expect the local storm water infrastructure to cope under all circumstances. "Water management is becoming a big environmental issue for construction companies as well as self-builders," he says.

"People are realizing that with more and more building we're overloading the infrastructure and that can only lead to flooding, so it's far better to do something with the water at the actual site. It's an area where people can make a huge environmental impact for the better. We're finding our drainage systems are being used

increasingly to channel water to where it can be put to good use and not discarded.

"People are starting to build beautiful natural wetland areas with storm water to encourage wildlife in to an area or they may choose to store the water and then use it for irrigation or for use in their toilets because it's just crazy that we water the garden, wash the car and flush the toilet with potable water."

If the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) warning that global warming is caused, at least in part, by human activity turns out to be correct, then Americans can expect to experience more flash flooding caused by a combination of warmer, wetter weather conditions. At the same time, as developers seek to expand urban areas to plots which have not yet been built on because of drainage problems, there is going to be increasing pressure on construction sites to not only shift the water to where it is not going to cause a building problems, but to also do something positive with that water.

It is worth remembering that although most people think nothing of using drinking water to nourish a garden, there is evidence that untreated, rain water is actually better for lawns, plants and shrubs, underlining the wastefulness of discharging a valuable natural resource in to the sewerage system.

## American Wick Drain: Channeling Forward

Drainage can have a huge impact on the environment. Digging a trench a couple of feet deep and wide to put a pipe in place which then has to have gravel placed around it requires a lot of aggregates to be brought to the site and then a lot of waste to be taken away by truck to a landfill site.

This wasteful process has prompted the creation of the American Wick Drain system which uses recycled plastic 'sheet and strip' drains which channel groundwater from where the site owner does not want it to be to where they would prefer it.

"We obviously still have some waste but our trenches are significantly narrower than conventional techniques, so we have a lot less waste than normal," reveals Jim Saxton, Mid-Central Regional Manager at American Wick Drain.

"It's much more efficient and our core drainage sheets are recycled plus we give site builders the option of doing something with their storm water. We can use our system to let gravity take the water to where the site owner would like it where they might choose to build a wetland area or store the water for irrigation."

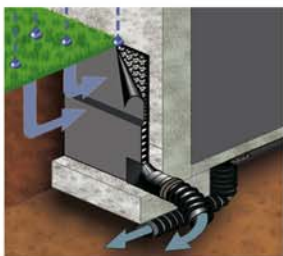
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TO MANAGE...

WATER

Focusing Our Sites on Gaining Ground  
americanwick.com



**A**merican Wick Drain provides proven, engineered, cost effective alternatives to pipe and stone systems. If you are looking for a greener, more efficient way to collect, transport and redirect water with minimal impact to the existing site ... AWD has the answer. We're not just down to earth, we're ... Focusing our Sites on Gaining Ground.



- Reduced Site Disturbance
- Green Friendly – Recycled Content
- Increased Collection Capacity
- Site & Stormwater Management
- Strategies to attain LEED Credits

