

## Stormwater-friendly Surfaces

### Summary

Suburban and urban environments are made up of lots of hard surfaces that water cannot soak through, like roads, buildings, airports, the blacktop at our schools, and even the streets and homes in our neighborhoods. When it rains, stormwater picks up pollutants from these surfaces and runs off very quickly as it makes its way to our precious waterways. In SWPPP, you've learned about some of the harmful impacts that pollutants have on animals (and people)!



However, before these areas were developed, natural areas were made up mostly of surfaces that rainwater could soak through, like meadows, forests, and even deserts. Imagine if our urbanized areas could still soak up polluted rainwater. Rather than the pollution flowing directly into our waterways, it would naturally filter through the soil. In fact, stormwater engineers today recommend transforming hard, **impervious** surfaces back to more natural conditions, where water can once again soak into the soil. Some examples you might find in your schools or in your neighborhoods are bioswales, rock drainages, or even planters with water-wise plants.

In this activity, you'll scout your house to find items that are **impervious**, meaning that water cannot penetrate or go through, and you'll also find some items that are **pervious**, which means that it allows water to soak through. Then you'll go outside and see what impervious and pervious surfaces you can find in your yard or your neighborhood.

Table:  
**Impervious**



Sponge:  
**Pervious**



## Activity

1. Gather materials: Watering can, Activity Data Sheet.
2. Find 6 total items **inside** your house that represent pervious and impervious surfaces. Find 3 that represent a pervious surface (for example, a sponge) and 3 that represent an impervious surface (for example, a countertop).
3. Now go **outside** and find 3 pervious items and 3 impervious items. Pour water on the surface to see if water soaks through or not.
4. Identify one impervious surface in your yard or neighborhood that could be transformed into a stormwater-friendly pervious surface.

## Activity Data Sheet

Inside Items	Pervious	Impervious
1.		
2.		
3.		
Outside Items	Pervious	Impervious
1.		
2.		
3.		

How are the **inside** items and **outside** items in each column alike?

How would you transform the impervious surface you identified into a stormwater-friendly pervious surface?

Share your photos with us at [info@bckprograms.com](mailto:info@bckprograms.com)