If you wouldn't drink it, don't dump it!

Volume 5, Issue 1

Water Watch

What's With the Little Black Fences?

Perhaps in your travels through the City you have seen some of the little black fences pictured below. So what are they? Why are they there? What do they do?

A silt fence

What are those things?

Those little black fences are silt fences. They are temporary barriers used to keep dirt and sediment from leaving construction sites.

Silt fences are made of filter fabric that is designed to slow the flow of water and allow dirt, soil, sand, and other heavier particles to settle out.

The filter fabric is trenched about 8 inches deep into the soil. This keeps the water from undercutting the fence, causing greater erosion.

The fabric is then stretched between and mounted to support posts. Silt fences are usually about 18 inches above the soil.

Why are they there?

Those engaging in construction activities in the City are required to obtain a Storm Water Construction Activity Permit (SWCAP). The SWCAP was instituted as a means to prevent the discharge of sediment and other construction related pollutants at construction sites from being discharged into storm water runoff.

Sediment and debris from construction sites are a major source of pollution to waterways and water systems located within the City and surrounding areas. Each year storm water runoff carries tons of sediment from construction sites into local drainage systems, irrigation systems, canals, rivers, and lakes.

A SWCAP contains control measures that should:

- prevent or minimize the discharge of sediment, debris and other construction-related pollutants from the construction site by storm water runoff into the storm drainage system.
- prevent or minimize the deposit, discharge, tracking or dropping of mud, sediment, debris or other pollutants onto public streets and rights of way.
- preserve existing vegetation where possible and should stabilize disturbed soils as soon as possible.

Silt fences are just one example of best management practices used to meet these goals.

A silt fence could have kept this dirt from leaving this site

What do they do?

A silt fence is installed in places where sediment-laden water can pond. As the flow of water slows, the heavier sediment particles are allowed to settle out to the bottom. The cleaner water is then allowed to

(Continued on back)

If you wouldn't drink it, don't dump it!

City of Orem Public Works
955 N 900 West
Orem, UT 84057

Phone: 801-229-7500
Fax: 801-229-7599

We're on the Web!
www.orem.org

(Continued from front)

flow through the filter fabric into natural or man-made storm water conveyances.

This practice protects streams, wetlands, City streets, and storm sewer systems from stockpiled soil and eroded soils from graded lots.

What don't they do?

Silt fences are not designed to collect sediment in drainage channels. Silt fences used in channels are often washed out from water seeping under them. Debris fences can be used in these situations.

They only work if they are properly installed and maintained. A silt fence should be cleaned after the silt depth reaches half the height of the fence.

Pesticide Use—Part 2

In our last issue, we discussed the problems associated with overuse of chemical pesticides; "cultural" pest control (creating the best conditions for desired plants to grow); and biological controls (use of predators, parasites and pathogens).

Mechanical Control

Practice the vanishing art of hand-weeding. When health, expense, environmental consequences, and even time are considered, small problems with lawn weeds are handled in no better way.

Till the soil in weedy areas rather than using herbicides.

Like hand-weeding, a few large insects (such as certain caterpillars) may be easily removed by hand in little time.

Use mulches to reduce weed problems, conserve moisture, and prevent soil erosion.

Chemical Control

When you have accurately identified a pest in damaging numbers (above a plant's tolerance threshold) and other controls have failed or are impractical, carefully choose a pesticide. Pesticides are usually effective only during certain stages of the pest's life and at specific concentrations. If possible, select a pesticide that is designed to kill only the insects, weeds, or disease organisms causing the damage. Less toxic pest control products include:

- *Microbial insecticides*—Those derived from microorganisms such as *bacillus thuringiensis*.
- Inorganic insecticides—Some oils and soaps kill pests on contact and pose little threat to the environment. Insecticidal soaps destroy pest membranes and are effective against soft-bodied insects.

Pesticide Application

Use pesticides only when other control methods fail. Extensive use of pesticides can kill beneficial organisms that help keep pest populations under control.

- Read the label carefully—it tells how, when, and where too use the product.
- Apply only the amount specified on the label and apply only to the plants and areas listed.
- Wear protective clothing as directed on the label. Do not wash clothing contaminated with pesticides with other clothing
- Make sure the pesticide is designated for use on the pest you want to control. Do not mix different pesticides unless instructed by the directions.
- Keep pesticides in their original containers so you know what they are and how to use them. (It's also the law.)
- Do not apply pesticides if rain is forecast (unless specified on the label)...Pesticides do need to be watered-in after application, but rain or watering can wash others off plants, decreasing effectiveness and possibly contaminating lakes and streams. (Read the label!)
- Never spray pesticides on breezy days. The spray drifting in the wind poses a serious danger to untargeted plants and animals—including those in neighbor's yards.

- Never apply pesticides on bare ground or eroded areas. When it rains, pesticides can easily be washed off these sites with eroding soil.

To be continued in the next issue of WaterWatch...

Source: *Yard Care And The Environment* by the West Valley City Storm Water Utility