

## PERMEABLE PAVING OR POROUS PAVING

It is just a few years ago that we were told that (due to Global Warming) we would not be able to use our finite water supply on our gardens and we would have to seriously consider moving to a Mediterranean style of garden, with a much lesser dependency on irrigation.

We are now (due to Global Warming) advised not to pave our front gardens, to avoid water “run off”.

We should consider this option carefully, as the streets are rapidly becoming little more than “car parks”, and we should be seeking ways of removing cars from the streets.

Generally it is public highways and pavements, where the surface water is directed to our drains. With garden patios, the water is normally directed back on to the garden, where the water can filter through the earth as normal. Where paving slabs are used for patios and laid on a 50mm bed of shingle, this allows water to percolate between the slabs into the ground in due course and will greatly improve the process.

“Porous Paving” – this is where paving blocks are made with a porous concrete, the water passes through the blocks as opposed to passing around the blocks.

It should be noted that these products, as experience indicates, within a few years will become blocked with calcium salts and debris.

More effectively “Permeable Paving” allows the water to percolate through the joints; unfortunately block paving depends on tight joints for its stability – so various types of joint have evolved where water can percolate through the joints. Permeable pavements require frequent maintenance, removing debris etc.

We should also appreciate why we pave in the first place – it is to remove surface water in addition to providing a stable surface. So if we allow water to pass through to the subsoil without a solid base, heavy traffic will cause the surface to break up with saturated ground beneath – hence any foundation will also need to be permeable.

During the severe flooding of 2007, water was observed running off ploughed fields, so once the ground is saturated, the water will run off the ground surface, regardless of whether it is paved or not. Porous or permeable paving will probably only ever be entirely successful, with normal or moderate rainfall – when risk of flooding is minimal.

### **Footnote.**

**More comprehensive information can be found at:**

**Interpave – [www.paving.org.uk](http://www.paving.org.uk)**

**Paving Expert – [www.pavingexpert.com](http://www.pavingexpert.com)**