

Paving without the Pavement

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If there is one thing I hear on a regular basis as a professional landscaper it's a request for "Drought tolerant, attractive & easy to care for." That's where modern hardscaping comes in. To those of us living along California's Central Coast we know the value of water hardscaping is water-wise. In this short piece, I'm pleased to introduce paving alternatives.

My focus here is on a new landscape product called pathway stabilizer. The product comes in liquid form and is applied to soils and crush rock to form a hard surface. These stabilizers are liquid polymer agents that "bind" various medium together to form a hard service. Best of all the product can be used with almost all decorative soils, fine crushed rock and even sand. Once set, the surface is harder than asphalt, is not impacted by rain can support vehicle traffic and is dust free. Did I mention the benefit of weed control?

Pathway stabilizer is easy to handle. In most cases, folks purchase it in five gallon tubs. One gallon of product will treat 15 square. I recommend that folks use it with soil or crushed rock that is no larger than 3/8 inch in size. There is a commercial grade formula for surfaces that will require heavy traffic.

Installation is possible one of two ways. In most cases, homeowners simply dilute it with water and spray it onto compacted soil or rock. For bigger jobs that are subject to heavier traffic, I recommend that the product be rototilled into the surface being treated before compaction. Either way, pathway stabilizer is environmentally friendly, does not damage equipment and is easy to handle. Unused product can be stored for future use.

I know of jobs that were treated with pathway stabilizer five or more years ago. They have required little or no maintenance. From time to time something may puncture or crack the treated surface. When that occurs, a simple patch made up of the native material is all that is needed. Over time, a surface is simply refreshed by treating more material right over the top of the previously treated surface.

If it sounds like I'm excited about this new landscaping technology, I am. This new product presents an inexpensive way to pave pathways and even driveways. There are a number of different products out there. One of my favorites is Technisoil. However, it's up to you and your favorite landscape supply to make the right decision.

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Steve McShane Biography (Revised 7-14)

Steve McShane is Owner & General Manager of McShane's Nursery & Landscape Supply in Salinas, California. He has a B.S. in Soil Science from Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo and an M.B.A. from Santa Clara. He serves on the Salinas City Council. When not working, he loves hiking, traveling to far reaches of the planet and experimenting with exotic fruits. He can be reached at steve@mcshanesnursery.com .