

Success With Erosion Control
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If there is one incredible feature about the Central Coast of California, it's our striking rugged terrain. Many of our readers enjoy property built on such terrain. With it often comes the responsibility of erosion control. You know who you are. Folks that suffer soil loss and potential loss of property due to heavy rain. No better time than the present to invest in stabilizing hillsides, steep landscapes and even cliffs on your property. This article will walk you through some options.

I studied soil science at Cal Poly for five years and one the most fascinating areas of focus involved property managing unstable earth. While some property needs the attention of a civil engineer, your local landscape supply has some easy solutions in the tool box to help you. Some of favorites I'm often recommending are as follows:

- 1) **NATURAL STONE STACKED WALLS:** This is one of my favorite recommendations for individuals looking to stabilize a hillside. Homeowners are simply tasked with stacking rock in an effort to create terraces and slow water flow. Typically, folks use head size moss rock, noyio cobbles or gold granite pieces. The materials are inexpensive and easy to handle.
- 2) **BLOCK WALLS:** This is what is called for when dealing with a high value estates. As long as your walls are under four feet, you will not need a civil engineer. Your favorite local landscape supply will have options. Some of my favorite include Allan Block, Roman Stone, Legacy Estate Wall & Country Manor. All are placed without mortar and come in several different colors, textures and finishes.
- 3) **HIGHWAY & RAILROAD TIES:** This solution is about the most common seen in home landscapes. Both railroad and highway ties are treated to last for decades. They are often installed using rebar or pressure treated anchors to create short breaks or barriers on hillsides.
- 4) **BARK, STRAW WADDLES & JUTE NETTING:** These solutions are the lightest, easiest and often short lived. For small slopes I'm always a fan of simply spreading a good bark. In the case of straw waddles and jute netting, home owners will usually use them as a means of re-seeding hillsides with grasses and wild flowers.

The good news for difficult and steep landscapes is that there are a number of options when it comes to slowing water and stabilizing soil. Best of all, installation is easier than

you would think. Most folks approach their landscape supply with photos, maps and measurements. Once the right material is selected they bid the job and off they go.

The important message here is to address the challenging landscape you face before it addresses you. I've counseled dozens of homeowners that have experienced mudslides and failed driveways thanks to unexpected heavy rain. Here's to successful preparation this summer and fall to ensure a safe winter this coming year.

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