

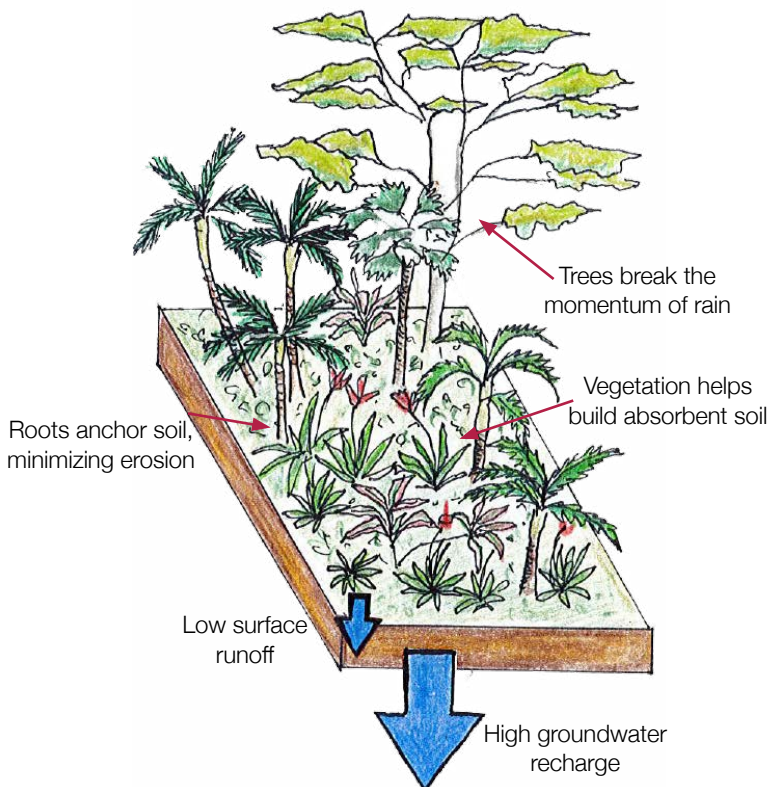
What is runoff and how does it affect coral reefs?



In an undisturbed natural landscape, trees and soil help soak up rainwater. However, in a developed or urban landscape, rainwater falls onto streets, parking lots, roofs, or other impervious (not absorbent) surfaces made of materials like concrete and asphalt. Instead of sinking into the ground or being stored in organic material, rainwater runs off the land, picking up harmful pollutants like nutrients, agrichemicals, heavy metals, and petroleum residues along the way. Eventually stormwater ends up in our oceans – either by traveling down storm drains, or by flowing into waterways like rivers and streams that lead to the ocean. When polluted stormwater flows into the nearshore environment, it poses a health threat to swimmers and causes significant harm to coral reefs and other marine life.

Natural Landscape

↑ percentage of absorbent surfaces



Developed or Urban Landscape

↑ percentage of impervious surfaces

