

Dear Monarch,

My house backs up to a slope in my community. I'm worried that when it rains, all the dirt and water will flood into my yard. What can be done?

EROSION CONTROL

Dear Concerned Resident,

Slopes are incorporated into planned communities for several reasons. These utility areas provide erosion control, a mental and physical break from your neighbors, and a sense of living alongside nature. While a slope is not intended to be a perfectly groomed landscape, it needs to be maintained in good condition with appropriate seasonal protection!

Your landscapers (and landscape consultants) are not engineers. If you see signs of movement, a geotechnical engineer should be sought. If you are merely concerned with typical sediment and water, here are some things to look for:

- Are the V-ditch and drains clear? If you have noticed a build-up of debris (usually from the gradual accumulation from planting projects, mulch applications, and typical leaf litter), mention it to your community manager prior to rain events.
- Straw wattle is one of the most common items you'll see at the toe of the slope. These long, netted tubes of straw are perfect for slowing down rainfall and catching sediment before water enters the drainage system. The natural materials used will degrade over time and can improve soil quality.
- Plants are the best defense your slope has against erosion. Root systems hold soil in place and absorb water. Roots will extend far beyond the above-ground greenery you see, don't worry if there is some space around individual plants.
- If there are bare areas on the slope, nets made from natural materials like jute or coconut fiber are a good choice for extra protection. If a slope has been bare for more than a season and already experienced heavy rainfall, these may not be necessary.

MONARCH TIP

Did you plant vines and hedges for privacy? Periodically check behind your fence for overgrowth encroaching on the slope – this can impede maintenance for the landscape crew.