



A protective grate on a surface inlet

# MAINTENANCE TIPS FOR — SUBSURFACE DRAINS

## 4. SURFACE INLETS

Surface inlets are installed to permit limited quantities of surface water to enter the subsurface drain. Surface inlets are of two types.

- ✓ Open inlets which require frequent cleanouts and trash removal from protective grates.
- ✓ Blind inlets which require replacement with clean sand, gravel, or rock as surface areas become clogged with sediment.



More specific recommendations for subsurface drains can be obtained from your local SCS district conservationist.



U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
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Subsurface drains are installed to improve soil-plant-water relationships and to improve soil stability. Subsurface drains have been known to function as designed for more than 50 years. Maintenance is necessary to assure long life to the drainage system.



A flap gate rodent guard on an outlet pipe  
(P-529-5)

## 2. RODENT GUARDS

- ✓ The rodent guard on the end of the outlet pipe frequently becomes clogged. It should be checked at least twice a year and replaced when it wears out or becomes damaged.

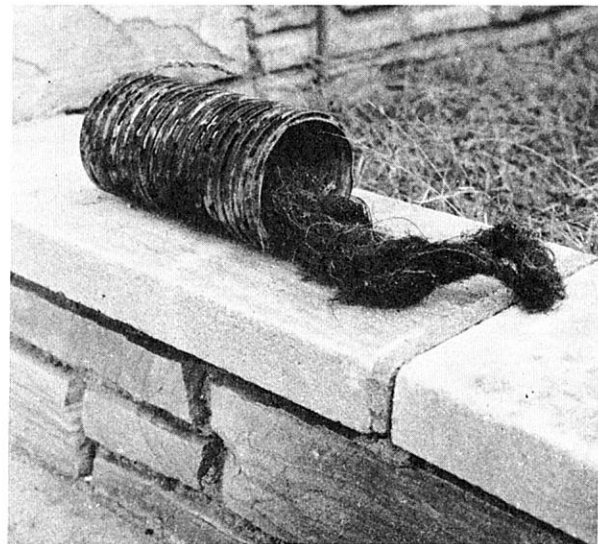
## 3. ROOTS

- ✓ Drains occasionally become plugged with roots from nearby trees and shrubs. A section of nonperforated pipe or tubing can replace perforated or open-joint drains where roots are a problem.
- ✓ Small roots from crops such as peanuts and alfalfa sometimes enter drains. A flap gate rodent guard will permit dead roots to be flushed from drains.

### KEY MAINTENANCE TIPS

#### 1. OUTLETS

- ✓ The outlet pipe is usually an 8- to 10-foot section of nonperforated metal pipe. An exposed outlet pipe is subject to damage and usually requires replacement after 15 to 25 years.
- ✓ The outlet pipe often empties into an open channel or ditch. Sediment accumulation and vegetation can block the outlet pipe. This reduces flow in the drain and may cause sediment accumulation in the line. Periodic ditch cleanouts will maintain free draining outlets.



Roots plugged this drain