

How to Build a French Drain Using FLEX-Drain® Products

A french drain is a method of eliminating boggy areas in your landscape by draining the water away using gravel or perforated pipe buried in gravel. The most important thing about building your french drain using our product or any perforated pipe is to make sure that you have a barrier to keep the dirt out. Otherwise, your pipe will fill with dirt and will not work to drain properly. In order to complete your project, you will need to purchase landscape fabric, (also called weedblock) gravel and perforated pipe or you will need to purchase gravel and perforated pipe *with a filter sock*.

Step one is to identify the area that needs to be drained and where you are going to drain the water to. Most ordinances require you to drain the excess water to a drainage ditch, storm sewer or dry well. (As a general rule, it is against code to drain it onto someone else's property.) You will want the exit end of your french drain to be at a lower elevation than the area that you are draining—it doesn't have to be a big change in elevation—even a few inches should be enough to keep the water flowing.

What you should know before you start

The ability of any flexible pipe to carry the weight of the soil and traffic loads is due to the composite strength of the pipe-backfill structure. As weight is applied the pipe flexes to equalize the load while the surrounding backfill forms a structural arch that transfers the load around the pipe and into the bedding. The final load-carrying capacity of the pipe-backfill composite depends on the quality of the pipe, the bedding, backfill material and the installation.



image 1



image 2



image 3

Working with perforated pipe *without* a filter sock

You will need to dig a trench or series of trenches depending on how large the area is that you are draining. Once the trench is dug, you will need to line the trench with a landscape fabric. Make sure that your fabric is wide enough to cover the gravel and pipe installation. 36 inch wide fabric should be adequate in most installations. Next you need to add an inch or two of gravel (crushed stone between ½" to 1" in size with few to no smaller pieces—**not** pea gravel). Once the gravel is in place, position the pipe in the trench (see image 1) and add more gravel until the pipe is covered by approximately 2" of gravel (see image 2). Fold the fabric over the gravel and pipe to keep the dirt out (see image 3). Once the fabric is closed, you may begin covering it with the excavated dirt.

Working with perforated pipe *with* a filter sock

The instructions are generally the same as they are when working with a pipe without a filter sock except you do not have to line the trench with landscape fabric. Please refer to the instructions above and the photos below.

