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Recycled glass used to make eco-friendly pavement

Bottles are ground into smooth pebbles to make eco-friendly pavement that traps pollutants

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FilterPave™, shown here in different colors, is one of the eco-friendly paving materials being tested at Morton Arboretum.

(Tribune photo by Phil Velasquez / September 8, 2009)

Drink beer. Help the environment.

That could be the message of a Wisconsin-based company that manufactures eco-friendly pavement from recycled beer bottles and other glass. The pavement, known as FilterPave, is about 40 percent porous, so it can trap pollutants that would normally be swept away into drains and streams.

"It's like a Rice Krispies bar," said Bill Handlos, director of Presto Geosystems, which started making FilterPave last year.

The company gets its glass from municipal recycling facilities and grinds it into smooth pebbles. The material is then solidified and used in parking lots, pathways and driveways.

Last week, workers poured the pavement on a 1,000-square-foot walkway at the Morton Arboretum in west suburban Lisle. The arboretum is testing several types of eco-friendly pavement

before selecting one to resurface its parking lot, said Kris Bachtell, the arboretum's director of collections and grounds.

The pavement has another eco-friendly feature: It keeps pavement cool by retaining water, which helps combat the urban "heat island" effect.

About 70 to 90 bottles are used per square foot of pavement, which comes in a variety of colors. Handlos said the product is generating interest from architects, who also like the aesthetics of colored glass pavement.

"It's very sparkly, very twinkly," he said. "It's quite attractive."

www.chicagotribune.com/news/chi-talk-recycled-glass-pavementsep14,0,2010234.story