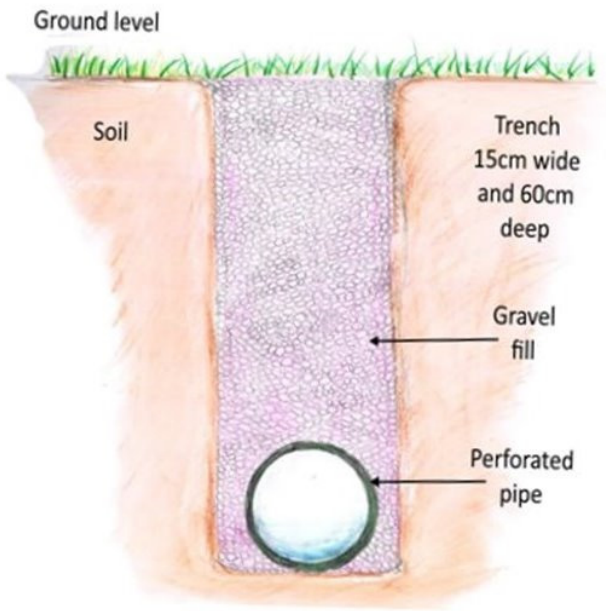
S3. French Drains

French drains can direct excess water to local soakaway(s) or to a swale or pond. Typically, the trench is 60 cm depth and 15 cm wide (width of a narrow spade) to accommodate a perforated pipe of 10 cm dia. Installing the piping with a slight downwards slope to the discharge will improve flow. French drains capture water from the surrounding soil (not just the area immediately above), moisture moves sideways through soil into the drain. French drains can also be used to slow through flow and hold water in the soil. Excessive ground moisture (flooding) can harm most plants. Therefore, effective drainage can be beneficial to most sites.



Advantages of French drains include:

- visually less obtrusive than most alternatives
- can be used as paths between beds
- algal growth is reduced/prevented due to darkness
- prevents/reduces the possibility of surrounding ground becoming water logging during periods of heavy rain
- maximises available ground for cultivation