



# Contaminated Urban Soils: 18 (Environmental Pollution)

*Helmut Meuser*

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With more than 50% of the world's population already living in towns and cities, migration from rural areas continuing at an alarming rate in developing countries and suburbanisation using more and more land in developed countries, the urban environment has become supremely important with regard to human health and wellbeing. For centuries, urbanisation has caused relatively low level soil contamination mainly by various wastes. However, from the time of the Industrial Revolution onwards, both the scale of urban development and the degree of soil contamination rapidly increased and involved an ever widening spectrum of contaminants. With constraints on the supply of land for new urban development in many countries, it is becoming increasingly necessary to re-use previously developed (brownfield) sites and to deal with their accompanying suites of contaminants. It is therefore essential to fully understand the diversity and properties of urban soils, to assess the possible risks from the contaminants they contain and devise ways of cleaning up sites and/or minimizing hazards. The author, Helmut Meuser, is Professor of Soil Protection and Soil Clean-up at the University of Applied Sciences, Osnabrück and is one of Europe's foremost experts on contamination from technogenic materials in urban soils. He has many years' experience of research in Berlin, Essen, Osnabrück, other regions of Germany, and several other countries.

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