

Caring For Your Septic System

Fact Sheet



Septic systems are biological systems which treat wastewater. The septic tank contains bacteria that slowly digest solids. These bacteria are sensitive and can easily be upset by commercial household cleaners and chemical products.

The soil in the drainfield contains microorganisms which are also sensitive to harmful chemicals. These chemicals can pass through the soil polluting our ground and surface water.

The best approach to keeping a septic system healthy, while protecting the environment, is to not let anything harmful go down the drain, and don't neglect regular pumping and inspection of your system.

Additional Septic Care Tips

- Recycle or properly dispose of household hazardous products. Do not pour them down the drain or put them in the garbage.
- Do not use your toilet or drains as a trash can. Cooking grease, fats, cigarette butts, disposable wipes, sanitary napkins, hair, plastics, lint, metal, rubber, coffee grounds, and cat litter should all be kept out of your septic system.
- Do not use a garburator unless your system is designed to accommodate the additional water and organic loads created from these devices. Instead compost your kitchen scraps.
- Do not use septic tank starters, additives or similar products. There is already naturally occurring bacteria in wastewater which will stimulate the natural biological activity in your system.

The best cleaning products happen to also be the most affordable:

- Baking soda for tubs, toilets and sinks
- Vinegar for windows and mirrors
- Lemon to make it all smell nice

Recipes for alternative cleaning products:

All purpose cleaner:

- » Mix ½ cup vinegar and 1 – 4 cups of warm water.

Natural laundry whitener:

- » To whiten whites, add ½ cup baking soda to each load.

Toilet bowl cleaner:

- » Sprinkle a few tablespoons of baking soda and scrub with a brush, add a few drops of lemon for freshness.

The most harmful cleaning products are the ones with warning symbols or complex chemical names on the containers.

Stay away from cleaners like these:

- Granular drain cleaner. One tablespoon may kill all of the beneficial bacterial in your septic tank. Catch hair, food bits and other solids before they go down the drain by using sink screens.
- Powdered laundry soap. It has filler in it that can clog septic pipes and soil. Liquid laundry soap is much easier on septic systems.

Alternative drain cleaner:

- » Pour ½ cup baking soda down the drain. Follow with ½ cup white vinegar. Cover and let sit for 15 minutes. Flush with 2 litres of boiling water. (do not use in your toilet – it may crack)