

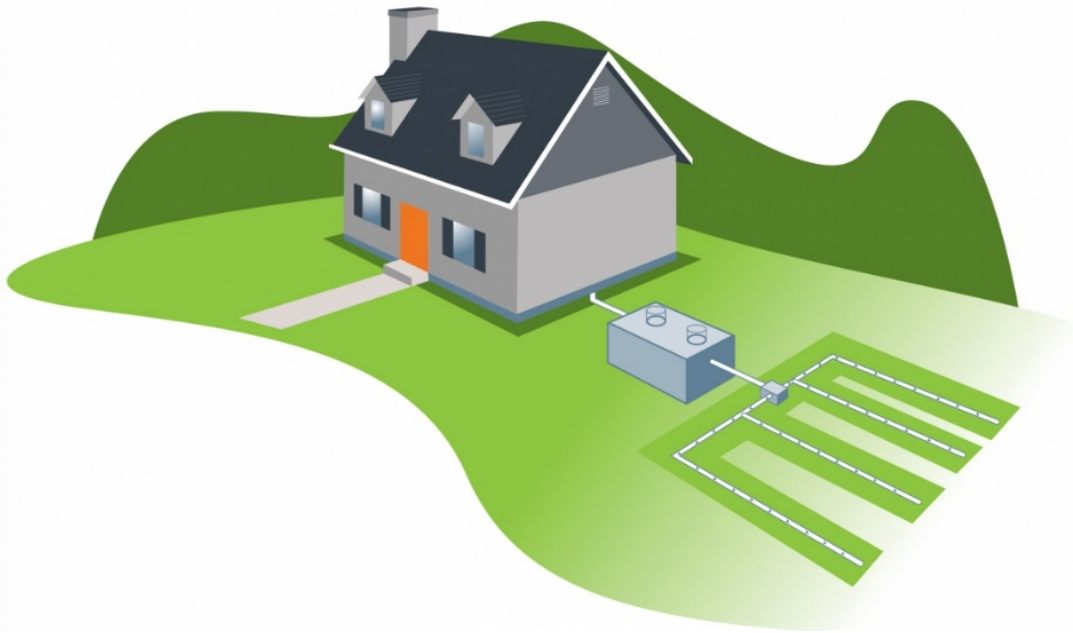
# Septic System Information Package

Legal Description: \_\_\_\_\_

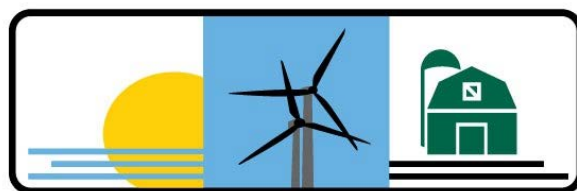
Roll Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Civic Address (911 Address): \_\_\_\_\_

Septic System Type: \_\_\_\_\_



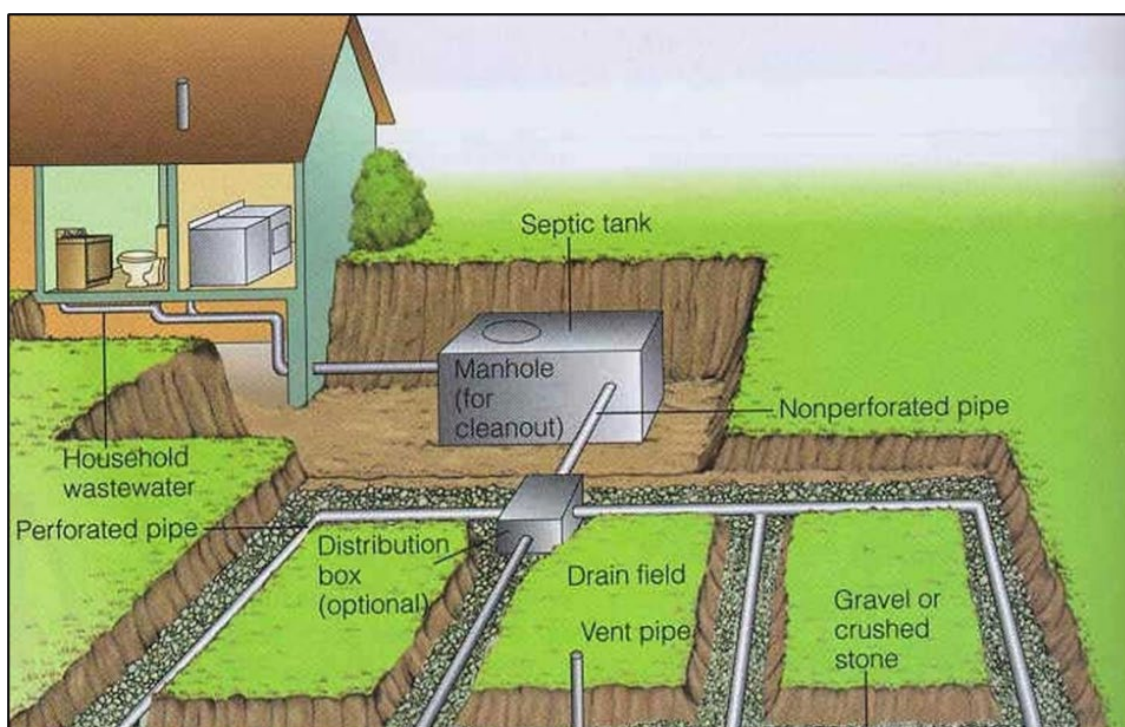
Find enclosed information for using and maintaining the septic system on your property. Please complete the forms provided and post relevant information for any guests and/or tenants. Should you sell your home, this package is to remain with the property for the next homeowner.



— TOWNSHIP OF —  
**ASHFIELD-COLBORNE-WAWANOSH**

# An Introduction to Your Septic System

Septic systems provide onsite treatment and disposal of household waste through a variety of natural processes. A typical system includes a septic tank and a drain field (also known as a leaching bed or weeping bed). Household waste, which includes waste from toilets, sinks, showers, and laundry machines, first enter the septic tank. In the tank, the solid waste is separated from liquid waste as the solid waste settles to the bottom. The solid waste forms what is called a 'sludge layer' on the bottom of the tank. Grease and oil float to the top of the tank, forming the 'scum layer'. Bacteria in the tank digests and decomposes the sludge and scum layers, slowly reducing the thickness of these layers. Wastewater exits the tank via an outlet and enters the drain field. The drain field consists typically of a series of perforated pipes, surrounded by gravel. The wastewater slowly infiltrates into the soil, which acts as a biological filter, further treating the water. The cleansed water then infiltrates down to the water table and into groundwater.



For proper treatment of waste, it is very important that the septic system size fits the house it is attached to. Proper sizing and maintenance of your septic system can have a significant impact on how long and effectively your system performs. A poorly functioning septic system poses risks to the environment and public health. Failed systems can also be very costly to repair or replace, so a little septic system care will go a long way!

For more information on septic systems, how to maintain your system and general tips for operation please see the fact sheet within this folder.

## Contact Information

Township of Ashfield-Colborne-Wawanosh

Building Department

519-524-4669 x 204

[building@acwtownship.ca](mailto:building@acwtownship.ca)

# Owner's Maintenance Guide

## Septic System Information

**Please post for maintenance recording such as in the utility room or any building serviced by a septic system. Contact the Township if you require any further information.**

System type:

Conventional

Tertiary (model): \_\_\_\_\_

Holding Tank

Other (model): \_\_\_\_\_

Tank size: \_\_\_\_\_

Distribution Beds:

Raised

Inground

Other \_\_\_\_\_

Distribution Method:

Distribution Pipe

Leaching Chamber

Other \_\_\_\_\_

Year Installed: \_\_\_\_\_

Installer Contact Info: \_\_\_\_\_

Service Provider Info: \_\_\_\_\_

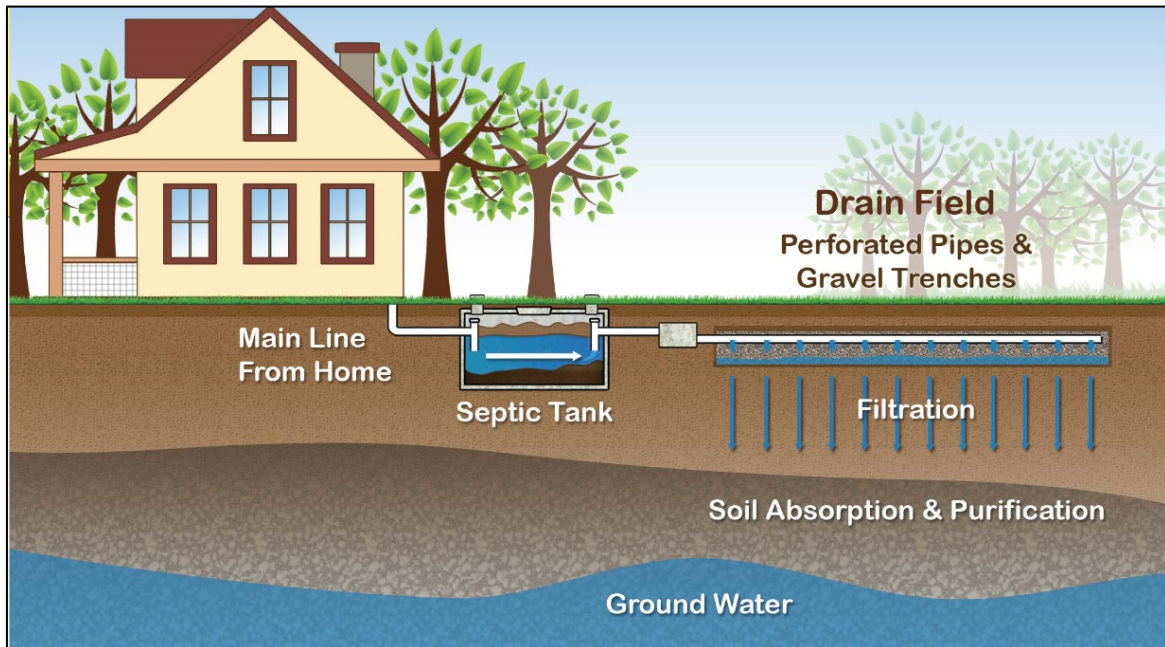
### Things to keep in mind...

- Regularly inspect your system (or hire a licensed professional) and hire a licensed sewage hauler to pump your septic tank or holding tank, as necessary. A pumping schedule of 3-5 years is recommended for septic tanks.
- Use water efficiently.
- Do not flush hazardous chemicals or pharmaceuticals down the toilet or sinks.
- Plant only grasses over and near your septic system; tree roots can damage pipes.
- Do not drive or park vehicles (including ATVs and snowmobiles) on any part of your septic system to avoid damage.
- Divert water from eavestroughs away from tank and bed areas.
- Test well water regularly, sample bottles can be obtained at the Township office or see [www.hp-ph.ca](http://www.hp-ph.ca) for more information.
- Post information (the Guest's Guide for example) for guests that may not be familiar to the use of septic systems.
- Ensure long term users like renters or lessees are aware of the use and care of septic systems, as well as when to arrange for maintenance.

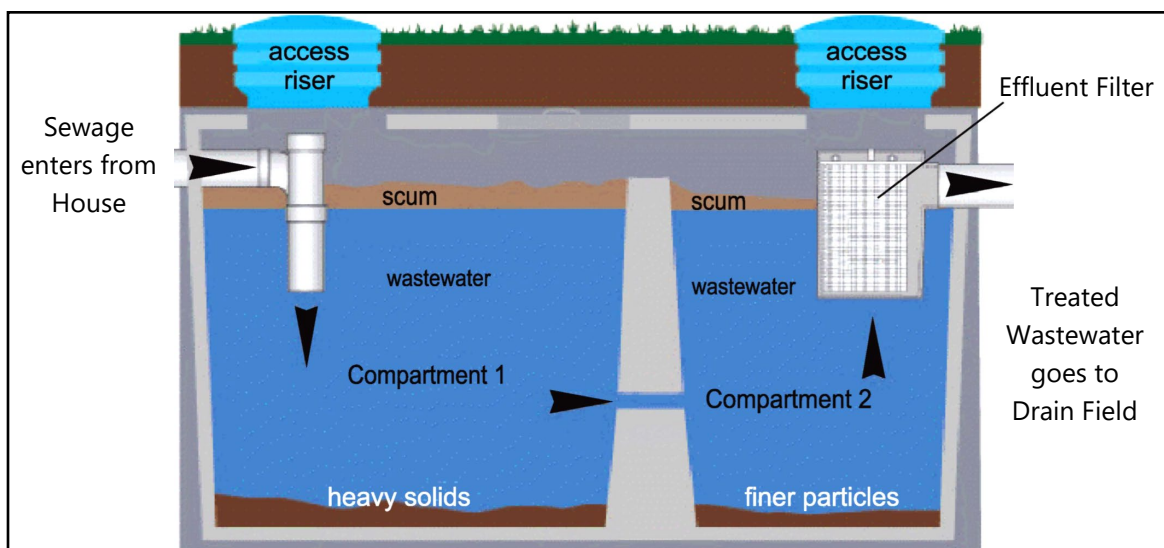
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# Conventional Septic System

A **conventional septic tank** collects sewage and wastewater from your home and is where the liquid and solid wastes separate. The lighter, liquid matter stays on the top, while the heavier solids sink to the bottom. This clearer layer (effluent) exits through the outlet pipe and disperses into the drain field. Depending on the size of the household, number of bathrooms, sinks, toilets, etc., it is recommended that your septic tank be pumped every 3-5 years. Many septic tanks have an effluent filter attached to the outlet inside the septic tank and this filter must be cleaned annually to ensure proper function of the septic system.



It is helpful to keep track of all maintenance contact information and visits on the provided Owner's Maintenance Guide.



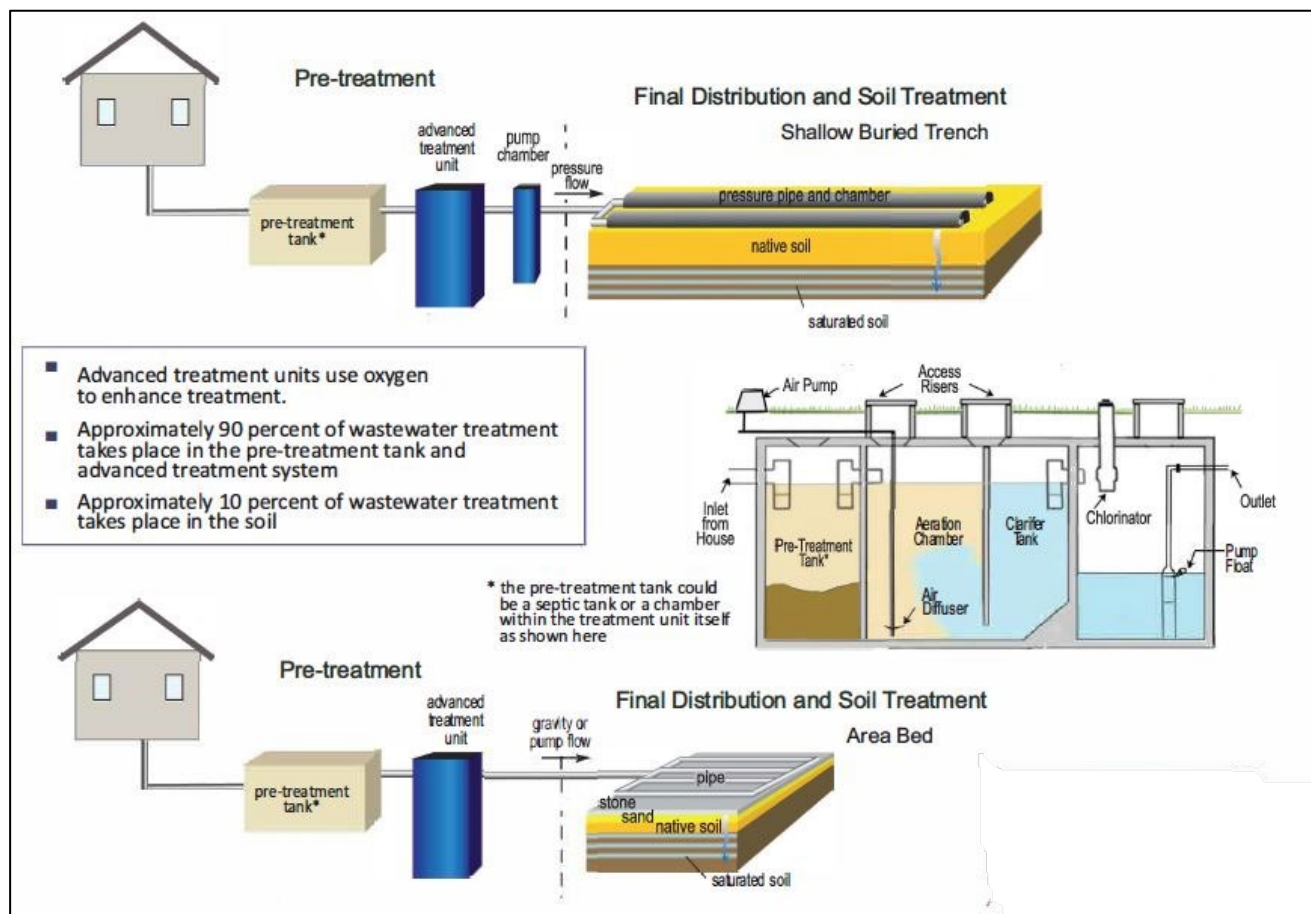


# Tertiary Treatment or Advanced (Aerobic) Septic System

**Advanced (aerobic) treatment or tertiary treatment systems** inject oxygen into the septic tank or drain field to increase natural bacterial activity to help treat the effluent (wastewater). These systems are installed in situations where the lot size is too small for a conventional drain field. An annual maintenance contract with a person who is authorized by the manufacturer to maintain the unit is necessary for aerobic systems. These maintenance visits ensure that any electric components are functioning properly as they are the crucial to the success of the system. **Maintenance paperwork must be submitted annually to the Township for their records.**

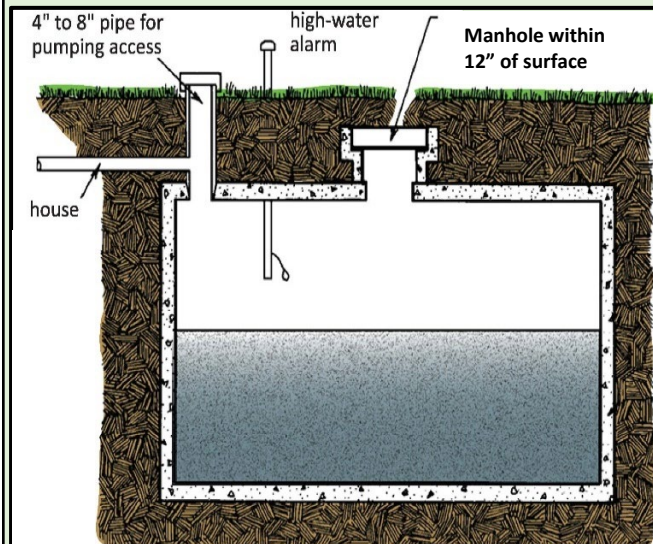
Consult the maintenance technician and owner's manual as to when any additional maintenance is required such as pumping of septic tank, replacement of filter media or cleaning of filters.

It is helpful to keep track to all maintenance contract information and visits on the provided Owner's Maintenance Guide.



# Holding Tank and Greywater Septic Systems

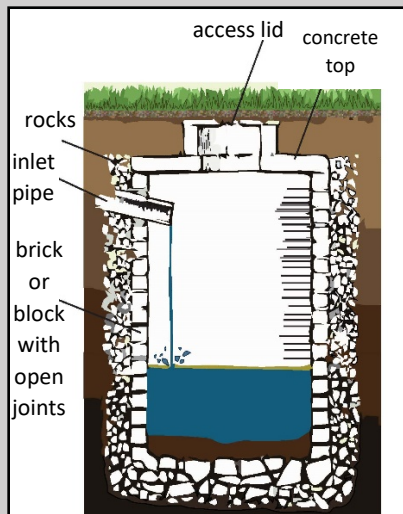
A holding tank collects sewage and wastewater, but it does not have an outlet pipe which allows wastewater to leave the tank and flow into a drain field. A holding tank simply stores sewage and depending on its size will have to be pumped much more frequently than a conventional septic tank system (monthly or seasonally).



Holding Tank

These tanks are to be equipped with an alarm to monitor levels and activate when pumping is required. Alarms should be tested regularly by the landowner by pressing the test button on the alarm control module.

**An agreement with a licensed sewage hauler must be kept on file with the Township.** It is helpful to keep track of all maintenance contact information and visits in the provided Owner's Maintenance Guide.



Greywater System

**Greywater systems** are commonly used on properties with privy (out house) accommodations only. Greywater is water waste that is from your shower, bathroom sink and laundry.

Greywater can be disposed of in what is referred to as a Class 2 system or a leaching pit. This type of system can only be used for the disposal of greywater wastes. Under the Ontario Building Code, this system can only be used if the daily greywater sewage flow is less than 1,000 litres per day.

# A Guest's Guide to our Onsite Septic System

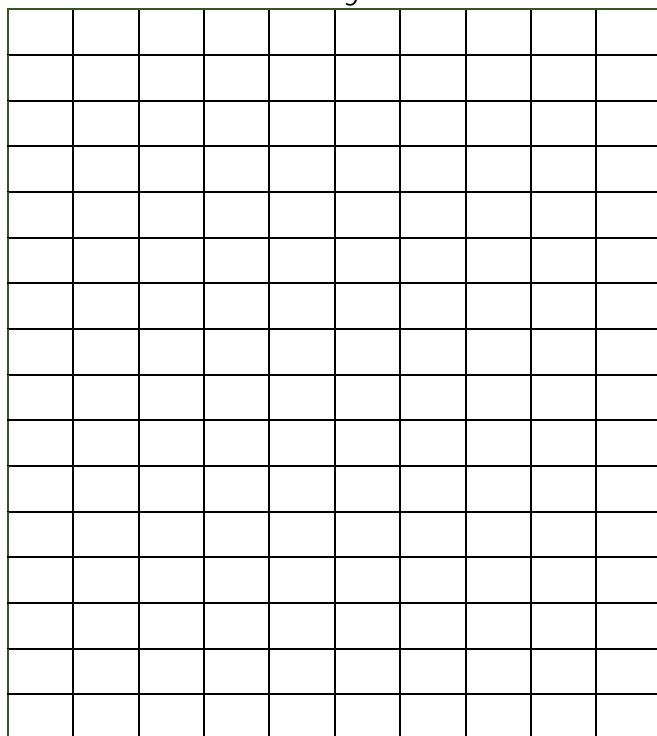
*Some important reminders while enjoying your stay...*

**Flush only toilet paper!**

## Reminder...

Do not drive or park on septic system.

*Lot Diagram*



## Did you know?

An onsite septic system is where the wastewater from household washroom, kitchen and laundry facilities are stored and/or treated before being safely removed from the property.



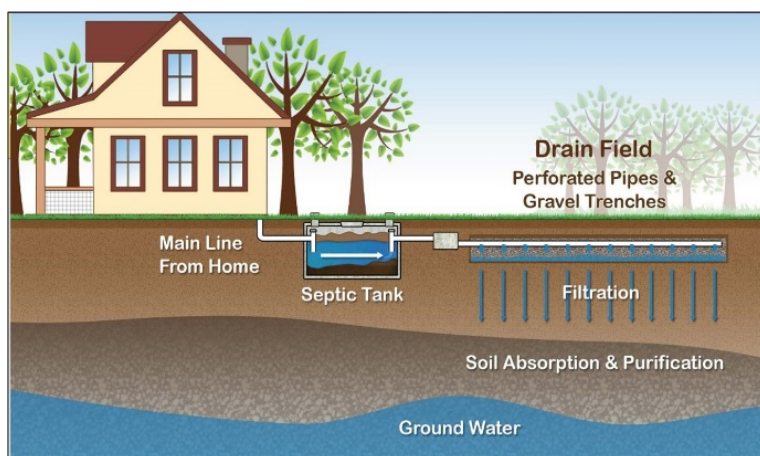
## Do Not Flush

- Tissues
- Baby wipes
- Grease
- Condoms
- Pharmaceuticals
- Varnish
- Coffee grinds
- Q-tips
- Pesticides
- Paper towels
- "Flushable" wipes
- Food scraps
- Tampons & applicators
- Dental floss
- Bleach
- Nail polish remover
- Cotton balls
- Paint



# Renters Guide to Septic Systems

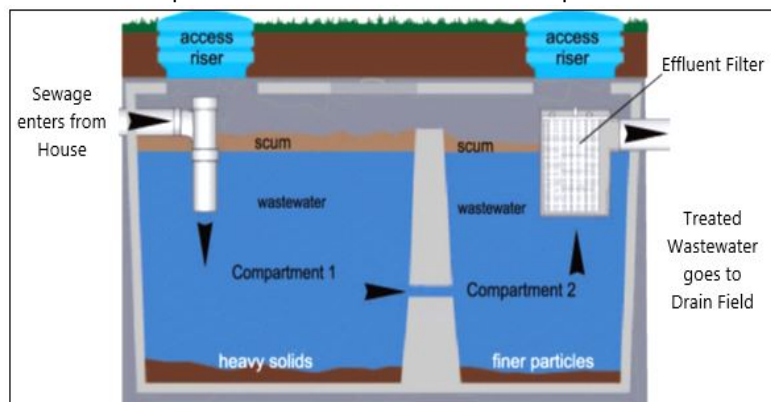
A typical septic system consists of two main components that work together to break down household waste, a septic tank, and a drain field (also known as a leaching bed or weeping bed). Wastewater first enters the septic tank where partial treatment occurs and then goes to the leaching bed where the final steps of treatment are carried out.



Do not put anything down but single ply toilet tissue and use biodegradable cleaning products.

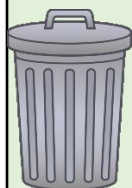
Do not drive or park on the drain field and practice water conservation to help the drain field disperse evenly.

Septic systems take household waste from bathrooms, kitchens and laundry rooms and break down the waste before discharging cleansed water back into the ground. However, neglected systems can have serious consequences for the environment and public health.



Septic systems rely on bacteria to break down organic material. Even small amounts of household products flushed down the sink or toilet can destroy the balance in the tank.

## These items should be put into the garbage, never in the toilet!



- paper towels or tissues
- "flushable" wipes
- baby wipes
- tampons & applicators
- nail polish remover
- cotton balls
- dental floss
- paint or varnish
- bleach
- food scraps
- grease
- coffee grinds
- condoms
- pharmaceuticals
- Q-tips
- pesticides

# Green Cleaning

When cleaning your home, look for labels that are biodegradable, phosphate-free and environmentally friendly cleaners - these will clean without upsetting the bacteria in your septic tank. Borax and ammonia are both safe alternatives to bleach. Any household cleaner that lists water as its first ingredient should be safe for your septic ecosystem.

Often these cleaning alternatives are already found in your home. Lemon juice and vinegar both are naturally acidic, making them miracle cleaners! Tackle stains and disinfect countertops, sinks, appliances, faucet and toilets - even hard water stains or soap scum are easily removed. Baking soda is also very safe and cleans as well as deodorizes toilet bowls, sinks and kitchen surfaces. Not only are these alternatives safe for your septic system, but they are also safe for your family and pets as well!

## All Purpose Cleaner

One-part white vinegar

One-part water

Lemon rind

Rosemary sprigs

Combine and pour into spray bottle and let sit for a few days before using.

Cleans hard water stains, countertops, garbage cans and leaves a fresh scent.

*\*\*do not use acidic cleaners on granite or marble as they will etch the stone\*\**

## Oven Cleaner

2 tsp Borax

2 tsp of liquid soap

Warm water

OR

3 tsp of baking soda

1L warm water

Place in a spray bottle and leave on surface for 20 minutes. Scrub with fine steel wool if necessary and wipe clean.

## Toilet Bowl Cleaner

Sprinkle baking soda and lemon juice into your toilet and leave for a few minutes. Return and scrub with a toilet brush.

## Glass Cleaner

2 cups water

½ cup vinegar

1-2 drops of orange or lemon essential oils (optional)

Spray and wipe with a paper towel or old newspapers for a streak free shine

## Clogged Drains

1 cup white vinegar

1 cup baking soda

Pour into the drain and let bubble for a few minutes. Flush with a teapot of boiling water.



### When possible, avoid using large amounts of:

- bleach
- crystal drain cleaners
- oven cleaners (both contain lye)
- furniture and leather polishes

These chemical cleaners should be used sparingly to maintain optimal septic system health.

# Landscaping & Septic Systems

Landscaping over a septic system does not need to pose a challenge for homeowners. The simple approach is to plant turfgrass or shallow rooted groundcover to reduce soil erosion and stabilize the area. Landscaping with a naturalized garden is not out of the question if you are mindful of the underlying septic system when choosing your plantings.

**Perennials** and **ornamental grasses** are best suited due to their non-invasive root systems and variety of drought tolerant species. Many native species are perfect candidates: black or brown eyed susan (*Rudbeckia* spp.), new england aster, switchgrass, and wild geranium.

Annuals can be added but you need to be mindful that a leaching bed is a series of shallow (a minimum of 10 inches below the surface) underground perforated distribution pipes set in gravel to allow septic tank effluent to drain over a large area. Adding extra soil, heavily mulching or watering of the area may interfere with the evaporation process.

Trees and shrubs are a much riskier choice than herbaceous plants for planting near a septic system. While it is recommended to plant trees off of the leaching bed and as far away as possible from the outside edges to avoid damage to the system, there are some native and ornamental species that are shallow rooted that could be added to your landscape.

Dogwood (*Cornus* spp.) trees, and Eastern Redbud are flowering trees, Japanese maple has many colors, and azalea, boxwood shrubs (deer/rabbit resistant) and holly shrubs are deciduous evergreens. All would be appropriate choices for areas near a drain field.

Avoid species like willow (*Salix* spp.) and poplar (*Populus* spp.) as these aggressively seek water and your drain field will require expensive repairs over time.

*Brown-Eyed Susan*



*Sweetgrass*



*New England Aster*



*Wild Geranium*



*Dogwood*



*Eastern Redbud*



*Holly*