



Septic System Myths

Myth: “Septic tank additives are necessary to help the system operate properly.”

Fact: Natural human waste contains all the ingredients necessary for septic tank function. It is not necessary to add chemicals, yeast, bacteria, rotten meat, or enzymes to the tank. Some products can actually harm the system and even contribute to the groundwater contamination (source, University of Minnesota Bulletins).

Myth: “Any bleach, detergent, or drain cleaner can harm the septic system.”

Fact: When used in normal household quantities, these products do not harm the system, as they are adequately diluted. Excessive use, however, may disturb the septic tank bacterial action. Do not dispose of drain cleaners, or any other household chemicals directly into your septic system. The chemicals can disrupt the work of bacteria in the septic

tank and contaminate the ground water.

Myth: “Boy, my system must be working great because I haven’t had to pump the tank in 15 years!”

Fact: This equates to “Boy, my car engine must be working great because I haven’t had to change the oil in 50,000 miles.” When the septic system **fails** because of clogging, pumping the tank will be too little, too late, and system replacement may be several thousand dollars. It’s cheaper insurance to clean the septic systems “oil filter” (tank) every three years.

Myth: Its “OK” to use “grey water” (sink, shower, or laundry discharge) on my yard or garden.

Fact: Current regulations do not allow anyone to discharge grey water on the ground surface. Greywater can contain pathogenic organisms and should be disposed of in an approved septic system.

Myth #1: I can't plant anything over my septic system.

AND

Myth #2: So I'll just install a patio over my tank or drain-field.

Fact #1: Although undisturbed, native conditions are best, it is not normally a problem if lawn, flowers, or a home garden are grown over a properly functioning conventional septic system. Avoid "in-ground" crops such as carrots and potatoes, and avoid trees, especially ones with pervasive roots such as willow, vine maple, alder, and oak trees. Any excavations should be kept very shallow.

AND

Fact #2: Don't construct anything over the drainfield, including patios, carports, sidewalks, or landscaping plastic.