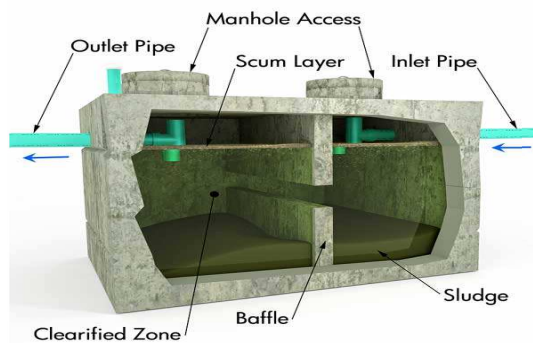


Septic System Fact Sheet



How to maintain your septic system

opportunity » growth » lifestyle



A Septic System treats and disposes of waste from toilets, bathrooms and kitchens. Simple attention to the care and maintenance of your Septic System can prevent contamination to the environment and protect the health and safety of your family

Follow these simple steps to ensure your system runs effectively:

DO:

- Use less water – the more water a household conserves, the less water enters the septic system. Efficient water use can improve the operation of the septic system and reduce the risk of failure. Try installing energy efficient taps, toilet, washing machine and dishwasher
- Repair any leaking taps and toilets immediately
- Only run your washing machine & dishwasher when you have a full load so less water is used. Remember to stagger the loads so the septic system is not over loaded
- Use a sink strainer – by using this in your kitchen sink you will reduce the amount of food matter entering your septic system

DON'T:

- Place toxic cleaning chemicals and disinfectants into your system, they will kill the bacteria that help your septic tank to function. Low phosphorus products are best
- Dispose of nappies, sanitary napkins or condoms down your toilet, they do not break down easily and may block the pipes in your system which will cost you money
- Pour cooking oil, fats, grease or tea leaves down the sink, they may also block the pipes in your system
- Empty your spa bath water into the septic system. The large amount of water will over load the system. Instead empty the water onto a grassed area away from the septic system

How do I know if there is a problem with my system?

The following indicates there may be a problem with your system:

- There may be a sewage odour coming from either the septic tank or the effluent disposal area. If you have just had the tank emptied there may be a smell for a short period of time, this is normal
- Water draining too slowly out of the shower or basins
- Drain pipes gurgle or make noise when air bubbles are forced back through the system
- A muddy puddle/excessive water on or around the effluent disposal area. This may occur from either placing heavy items or constructing buildings too close to the effluent disposal area. It can also occur from driving any vehicles over this area

To effectively maintain your system you should do the following:

- If you have a mechanical system, the septic tank must be pumped out every 3 years
- If you have a treatment system it must be serviced by a qualified service agent every 3 months
- You should get a plumber to inspect your system annually to ensure it is running properly, this could save you a lot of money if there is a problem with the system
- If you have a sand filter regularly check the concrete pit at the inlet and outlet to ensure that the water leaving the septic tank is not high in solids. If it is high in solids the septic tank may need to be pumped out
- If you have a grease trap, regularly inspect it (at least every 3-6 months). Arrange to have it pumped out as required, usually every 6-12 months for domestic use
- All records for de-sludging /servicing the septic system should be sent into Council

Planting the right trees/shrubs near the septic system is essential to ensure roots do not break the pipes

Suitable plants for your septic area

- Acacia Cyclops (Western Coastal Wattle)
- Acacia howittii (Sticky Wattle)
- Acacia Longifolia (Swallow Wattle)
- Acacia Retinoides (Wirilda)
- Callistemon citrinus (Crimson Bottlebrush)
- Callistemon viminalis (Weeping Bottlebrush)
- Callistemon lilacinus (Lilac Bottlebrush)
- Eucalyptus preissiana (Bell-fruit Mallee)
- Melaleuca ericifolia (Swamp Paperbark)
- Melaleuca halmaturorum (Salt Paperbark)
- Tamarix juniperina (Flowering Tamarisk)

Plants NOT suitable for your septic area

- Eucalyptus camaldulensis (River Red Gum)
- Eucalyptus citriodora (Lemon Scented Gum)
- Fraxinus raywoodi (Claret Ash)
- Eucalyptus cladocalyx (Sugar Gum)
- Populus nigra (Poplar)
- Salix babylonica (Weeping Willow)



Acacia howittii (Sticky Wattle)