

FIVE COMMON MYTHS ABOUT SEPTIC SYSTEMS

- 1) Septic systems last forever and never need replacement.
- 2) Flushing yeast or buttermilk into the septic tank will eliminate the need for pumping.
- 3) Washing machine wash water and rinse water should be discharged to the ground surface to protect the leach field.
- 4) If the septic system appears to be failing flush the septic tank with large amounts of water.
- 5) Weekly use of commercially available lye products will "clean out" plumbing and the septic tank.

IF YOU THINK ANY OF THE
ABOVE STATEMENTS ARE TRUE
YOU NEED TO READ THIS
PAMPHLET!!!

Produced by Contra Costa Resource Conservation
District under the Natural Resources Conservation
Service Watershed Grant
Nancy Thomas, Marsh Creek Watershed Coordinator



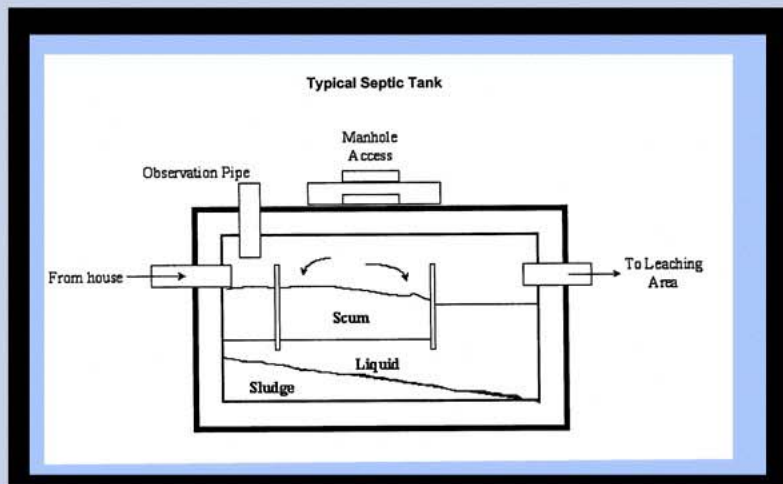
KNOW YOUR SEPTIC SYSTEM

Did you know about 25% of the U. S. population relies on decentralized-or onsite wastewater treatment systems? About 95% of onsite wastewater disposal systems are septic tank systems.



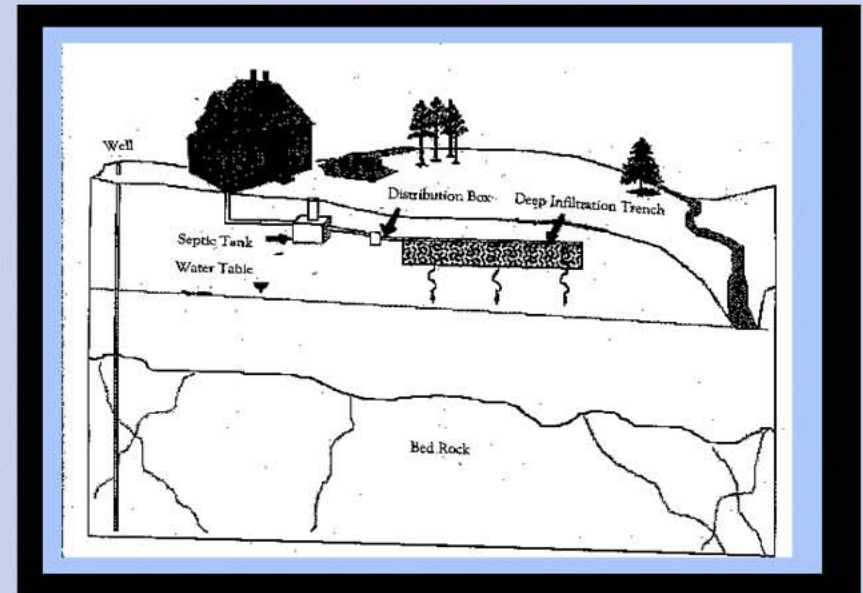
Proper care of your septic system

- ⊘ Inspect your septic tank once every year and pump as necessary.
- ⊘ Avoid putting materials such as grease, cigarettes, coffee grounds, sanitary napkins, solvents, oils, paint, caustic chemicals or pesticides into the tank.
- ⊘ Avoid the use of chemical or biological septic tank additives.
- ⊘ Use water wisely. Keep your usage below the "daily designated flow" or the maximum number of gallons the system was designed to handle per day.
- ⊘ Limit garbage disposal use.
- ⊘ Don't construct patios, carports, decks or use landscaping plastic over the drain field or septic tank.
- ⊘ Keep vehicles off the septic tank and drain field areas at all times.
- ⊘ Don't compact the soil over the tank or drain field in any way.
- ⊘ Direct surface drainage and water from roof drains away from the drain field and septic tank.
- ⊘ Don't dispose of water from hot tubs into the septic tank.
- ⊘ Keep a detailed record of all septic system maintenance activities.
- ⊘ Be aware of the location of all septic system components.
- ⊘ If you have a pump system be aware of the precautions to take during prolonged power outages.



FAQ's on Septic Tanks

The septic tank is the essential first part of an onsite sewage treatment system, and it is both very simple and very complex. Raw sewage flows into the tank from the house sewer line. The solids separate from the liquid and settle in the tank. The liquid flowing out is called septic tank effluent. A septic tank is watertight so that when 5 gallons of sewage enter from a toilet flush, 5 gallons of effluent must flow out of the tank into the leach field.



Anaerobic bacteria, that is they do not use oxygen from the air, grow in the tank. The by-products of their activities are methane and hydrogen sulfide gas, plus other substances having odor. Hence, the word "septic" has been applied to this tank. But the septic tank might also be described as a settling tank where the sewage solids are stored while the bacteria decompose them and reduce their volume. The volume is never reduced to zero, however, so a residue remains. It is this residue that must be cleaned out of the tank when the volume becomes too great.

