What You Should Know About Septic Tanks by Lexoremman

Article published on June 15th 2012 | Home Improvement

Unless you live in a location that requires them to treat the waste water that leaves your home, you probably haven't given much thought to septic tanks. Even those who rely on them as part of their septic systems might not quite understand how they function. Basically, they are the holding tanks of small sewage systems where waste is collected, separated and treated.

As waste water enters septic tanks, sewage solids fall to the bottom and scum floats on the top. Anaerobic bacteria flourish inside septic tanks and serve the task of decomposing the solids at the bottom of the tanks. The excess water from the floating scum leaves the tanks and enters leach fields.

Leach fields must meet specific criteria to ensure that the impurities of the waste water will be percoloated into the soil. Percolation tests are conducted prior to approving a leach field. It's important to document that the soil is porous and can handle the filtration and absorption of the waste water.

This step is paramount since the water will ultimately return to the groundwater. The waste water is well distributed in the field through pipes that have drainage holes. An underlying trench filled with gravel assists with further filtration as well as distribution

.

Some septic designs put two septic tanks to use for better efficiency through a more modern waste division and filtration system. Depending upon the amount of sewage that needs to be treated as well as the topography, pumps and siphons can be incorporated to regulate the outflow.

Although septic tanks are relatively low-maintenance, solids that aren't digested by the anaerobic bacteria (sludge) accumulate and must be removed to prevent costly problems. If the tank goes over it's optimum capacity, raw sewage waste can end up in the leach field. Overflow can quickly and easily clog the drainage piping. There can also be a problem with the filtration of the sludge as the process is greatly slowed.

Some locations of septic tanks are regulated by local authorities that require a specific time period to be followed for the inspection and emptying of septic tanks. In other areas, the home owners decide when to have their tanks pumped out. The amount of time before a tank absolutely must be emptied depends upon many factors.

The design of the septic system, the age and capacity of the tank and the number of people in the household all contribute to determining how long it will take before the tank fills. It could fill in a year or two. It might not need to be emptied for a few decades. The tank itself should last for about half a century whether made of fiberglass, plastic or concrete.

There are some things to be mindful of to make the septic system more trouble-free. Grease is generally hard to break down and large amounts can cause blockages. Non-biodegradable materials should never be flushed down the toilet or drains. Caustics and chemicals can cause damage to the tank. Garbage disposals can quickly take up space. It's much better to compost kitchen waste instead.

Don't plant deep-rooted trees or shrubs directly over the septic system because the roots can

impede the flow of waste water or even cause the pipes and tank to crack. Don't cover your leach field with any high-traffic use such as a playground or a parking area. As you can see, there is a lot to know about the selection, placement and maintenance of septic tanks.

Article Source:
http://www.articleside.com/home-improvement-articles/what-you-should-know-about-septic-tanks.htm - Article Side

Lexoremman - About Author:
To find out more on this topic, I suggests you take a look at a http://www.ukseptictanks.co.uk/septic-tanks which I found to be a useful resource about septic tanks.

Article Keywords:
septic tank, septic tanks

You can find more free articles on Article Side. Sign up today and share your knowledge to the community! It is completely FREE!