

TIP SHEET

Small Steps Toward Better Living

SEWAGE

Septic Gardens & Maintenance

Proper septic garden maintenance is essential in helping ensure that the garden continues to treat wastewater. Otherwise you may face replacing the garden, which can be very costly.

Follow these rules to care for your garden.

Share the Septic Garden!

- Septic Gardens help to reduce the space needed for a drainfield due to the garden stage of purification, yet you may still need more space than you have, we recommended partnering with a neighbor!
- Adjust the size of the septic garden based on the total number of people served: 9-14 sqft per person.

Protect the septic system from damage.

- Don't place anything other than native prairie and wetland plants on the septic tank, garden, & drainfield
- No driving, or building in any shape or form on top of the septic tank, garden, & drainfield.
- Keep trees at least 100 feet away from the septic tank and garden to reduce damage from roots.

Perform regular maintenance.

- Have a qualified professional pump the septic tank every 3-5 years. If you have a garbage disposal, have it pumped once a year. The gases in the tank are both toxic and explosive.
 - Do not allow the tank contents on the surface of the ground, the contents must be taken to a treatment plant for final treatment.

Don't overload the septic tank and drainfield.

- Check faucets and toilets for leaks and repair when necessary.
- Use aerators on faucets and flow reducer nozzles on showers to lower water use.
- Reduce water levels for small loads of laundry or wash only full loads.
- Try to spread laundry chores over the week rather than all on one day.
- Wait until the dishwasher is full before you run it.
- Use low-flow appliances to reduce water use.

The toilet isn't a garbage can.

- Never flush down the toilet any kitty litter, disposable diapers, sanitary napkins, tampons, condoms, paper towels, facial tissues, cigarette butts, coffee grounds or filters, plastics, dental floss or any product that will not readily break down.

If a garbage disposal is necessary, use it sparingly.

- Limit washing food scraps, coffee grounds or similar materials down the drain.
- Do not pour grease down the drain. If grease reaches the absorption area it can clog the drain field.

Use cleansers in moderation and keep toxic or hazardous chemicals out of the system.

- Exclude anti-freeze, gasoline, paints, varnishes, paint thinners, pesticides, pharmaceuticals, photographic chemicals, oils, and waste oils.
- Most septic garden additives are at the least ineffectual and in some cases can damage the septic garden.
- The overuse of cleansers such as bleaches, disinfectants, anti-bacterial soaps, drain cleaners and toilet bowl cleaners can impact the number of bacteria in the garden that are needed to treat the wastewater.

