

Septics Edition

First Flush, "tIssue" #10

Winter 2011-12

Things to Know About Caring for your Septic System, con't.

Remember, you should think about your septic system as a living and breathing entity, much like your body. There are good and bad bacteria present in a septic system, so—just like your body—septic systems are very sensitive to what you put in them. This issue continues with tips regarding what you can do in the home to help care for your septic system.

Additives:

Washington Dept. of Health (DOH) does not recommend any additives, and the Legislature found in 1993 that *"most additives do not have a positive effect on the operation of onsite systems, and can contaminate groundwater aquifers, render septic drainfields dysfunctional, and result in costly repairs to homeowners. It is therefore the intent of the legislature to ban the use, sale, and distribution of additives within the state unless an additive has been specifically approved by the Department of Health."* (DOH Publication 337-025) A law was created, RCW 70.118, which requires the approval of additives by DOH before their use, sale or distribution. There is no evidence that any additive has ever improved the life of a septic system and some additives can even be harmful.



What about adding yeast or raw hamburger to your tank?

Some people swear by this. Our recommendation is you add these products only after cooking with them and feeding your family first. This way, you get the satisfaction of eating the food (and then feeding your septic system later)! 😊



Drain cleaners:

Drain cleaners are very caustic and can kill everything in your septic tank. If you have a clogged drain try snaking it out instead of using a toxic drain cleaner. You can help maintain clear drains by pouring down a mixture of boiling water and baking soda every month.

Medications:

If you are on strong antibiotics for a long period or have had chemotherapy treatments, have your septic tank checked. You may need to have the tank pumped because the chemicals for your medical treatment may have affected the good bacteria working in



Final Flush
The "First Flush" of *Clean Water Herald: Septics Edition* is officially over with this issue. Initial issues focused on new requirements for onsite septic system inspections:
Conventional systems: every 3 years
Pressurized alternative systems: every year
See the webpage below for complete details.

Environmental Health hopes you've gained new appreciation for your "personal wastewater treatment plant" and the care it needs to protect the environment, public health, and your investment.

This county-wide newsletter has been a project of Ecology's Centennial Clean Water Program, EPA, and Clallam County. All "tissues" and a topics directory are online at the address below.

Other Onsite News

Environmental Health now accepts online as-built requests for the *as-built* recorded drawing of your onsite septic system. Homeowners as well as onsite industry and real estate professionals may make their request at the web address below.

The Do-It-Yourself septic system inspection Pilot Project is nearing completion. An evaluation of the program will be made available in 2012, followed by the online "Septics 201" course for homeowners. In the meantime, "Septics 101" is available online—see the Calendar on back.

Finally, EH staff asks for your patience and understanding that, due to budget cuts, our response time may be longer than normal.
Thank you.

there. Be sure to take medications no longer being used to a participating pharmacy for disposal. Do not flush them down your toilet! Medications can harm your septic system—or end up in the groundwater and then in your drinking water... yuck!

Garbage disposal:

Avoid using a garbage disposal when on a septic system. Garbage disposals grind up unprocessed food into small pieces which can clog your pipes or plug your drainfield. Composting is a great alternative!



Clallam County Onsite Program Websites

Onsite septic systems (OSS) in general:
Septic O&M; inspection requirements:
Septics Edition newsletter:
To order an "as-built" drawing:

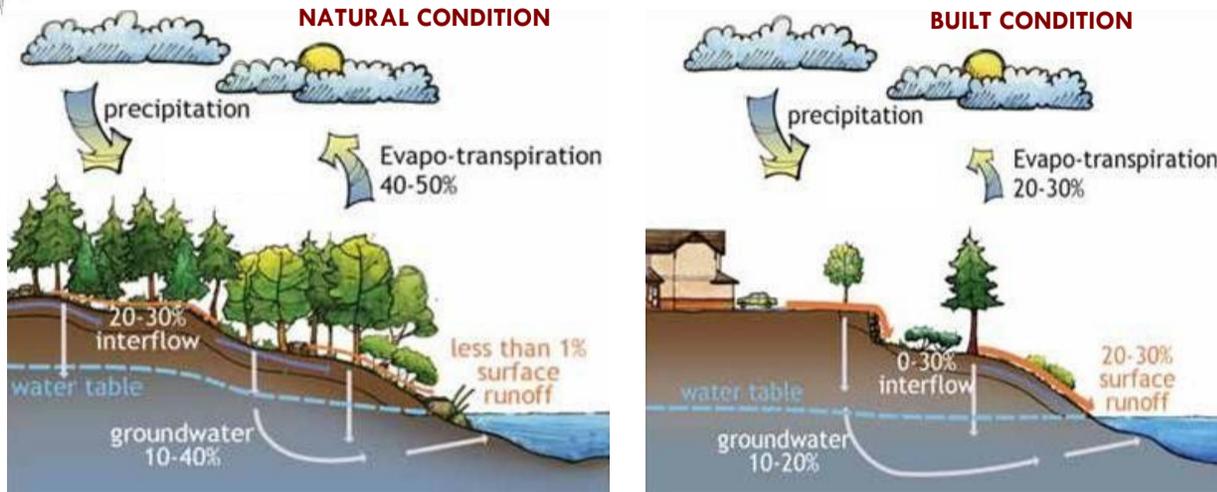
<http://www.clallam.net/HHS/EnvironmentalHealth/onsite.html>
http://www.clallam.net/HHS/EnvironmentalHealth/onsite_om.html
<http://www.clallam.net/HHS/EnvironmentalHealth/ehnewsletter1.html>
http://websrv7.clallam.net/forms/eh_asbuiltrequest.php



The Water Column

“Rain, Rain, Go ...Down!” Into the ground...

Whatever you do to encourage rain water to soak into the ground will protect your property and retain the natural hydrology of your watershed. Browse the County website for tips and information on managing stormwater on your property as well as county-wide, and potential regulatory changes for new development: http://www.clallam.net/RealEstate/html/stormwater_management.htm



Graphics by AHBL, Civil and Structural Engineers, from the “Low Impact Development Technical Guidance Manual for Puget Sound” (2005, by Puget Sound Partnership)

Clean Water Herald—Septics Edition Winter 2011-12

Clallam County Environmental Health Services
223 E. 4th Street, Suite 14
Port Angeles, WA 98362

PRSRT STD
U.S. Postage
PAID
Olympic Mailing
Services



Landlords and ladies! Please share with your renters!

The address used is the taxing address on record in the Clallam County Assessor's Office for one or more properties that are (or are likely, according to land use information) utilizing an onsite septic system.



WINTER CALENDAR

The Clean Water Herald is a periodic newsletter sponsored by members of the Clean Water Work Group, to inform and promote good stewardship of our shared natural resources.

The “**Septics Edition**” series will be published quarterly through 2011 by the friendly staff at Environmental Health Services, a division of the Clallam County Health & Human Services Department.

Contact us at the courthouse, 360-417-2258, or visit www.clallam.net/envhealth.

Major funding for the **Septics Edition** is provided by the Centennial Clean Water Fund through a grant from Washington Department of Ecology.

Printed on 30% post-consumer content recycled paper.

Septics 101 Online

A 30-minute video and quiz are available through the link below. When you've completed the course and quiz, print and save your Certificate of Completion.

There are no in-person Septics 101 classes scheduled at this time.

Take Septics 101 online at

http://www.clallam.net/HHS/EnvironmentalHealth/onsite_septic101.html

Septics 201 Planned release in 2012

Also known as **Do-It-Yourself (DIY) inspection training**. Pilot test results are forthcoming. Eventually, the training will be available for homeowners to conduct a certified inspection of their septic system and submit the results for the database maintained by EH.