

# Maintaining Septic System Infrastructure



Equally important to what you put into your septic system is how you protect the land over and around it. The overall function of the system is reliant on each individual element of the system being in good order.

In many cases the effluent disposal area can span over 100m<sup>2</sup>, representing a sizeable area in close proximity to the home which has to be kept in accordance with the original wastewater permit conditions.

## Structures around your System

A common issue, particular on small house blocks, is accidentally paving, concreting, decking or even building extensions or sheds on top of the septic infrastructure. If this activity doesn't damage the infrastructure directly through the construction phase it eventually leads to issues related to:

- Inability of plumbers and pump out agents to access the system
- Failure of effluent disposal field due to lack of plants to support removal of water from the system.

## Livestock and Vehicles

Grazing and parking vehicles over the top of your septic should be avoided as it can:

- Compact the ground in your effluent disposal field, affecting the drainage of treated effluent into the surrounding soil
- Direct damage to the septic tank or other aspects of the system

## Water Accumulation

Effluent disposal areas function best when they are well drained, enabling the treated effluent water to be readily accepted by the surrounding soil. To assist with this:

- Avoid allowing storm water to drain to the same area
- Consider installing drains or other modifications uphill from the system to divert water runoff

## I'm not sure where my septic system infrastructure is?

Infrastructure may be identified by:

- Contacting a licensed plumber, preferably who has worked on your system previously
- Requesting from Council a copy of plans for your wastewater system.

\*Council does not have records for all properties, fees may apply

# Planting around your septic system

Trees, plants and grasses around your septic system play a key role in how your system operates. It's important to avoid varieties which have invasive, water seeking root systems; certain types of vegetables and fruiting trees also shouldn't be allowed to grow near your septic system as their crops can accumulate the viruses or bacteria found in the effluent.

## Do Plant:

\*generally stick to grasses directly over infrastructure

Canna Lily  
Calla Lily  
Ginger Lily  
Sticky Wattle  
Crimson Bottlebrush  
Scarlet Bottlebrush  
Wooley Tea-Tree  
Cross Honey Myrtle  
Swamp Paperbark  
Salt Paperbark  
Flowering Tamarisk  
Cannas

Common Spike-Rush  
Buffalo / Kikuyu  
Geranium  
Hydrangeas  
Tall Wheat Grass  
Strawberry Clover  
White Clover  
Perennial Rye  
Bougainvillea



*Canna Lily*

## Don't Plant:

River Red Gum  
Lemon Scented Gum  
Claret Ash  
Sugar Gum  
Plane Tree  
Poplar  
Weeping Willow  
Alder  
Birch Tree  
Beech Tree  
Elm Tree



*Weeping Willow*



*Plane Tree*

## Contact Us:

For further information, please contact  
Council's Environmental Health Team on 5662  
9200 or visit Council's website:  
[www.southgippsland.vic.gov.au/wastewater](http://www.southgippsland.vic.gov.au/wastewater)