# **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.

<sup>\*</sup>Council does not have records for all properties, fees may apply

# Planting around your septic system

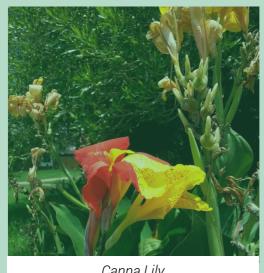
Trees, plants and grasses around your septic system play a key role in how your system operates. It's important to avoid varieties which have invasive, water seeking root systems; certain types of vegetables and fruiting trees also shouldn't be allowed to grow near your septic system as their crops can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

