

# **HOW DO I TAKE CARE OF MY SEPTIC SYSTEM?**

***(Maintenance is probably the single most important consideration in making sure your septic system will work well over time.)***

By following the recommendations below, you can help your system work properly for years.

## **Don't.....**

- **Use your toilet or sink for a wastebasket!!!!**
- Use additives to eliminate septic tank pumping (*Commercial septic tank additives will not eliminate the need for periodic clean-out.*)\*
- Use a garbage disposal. If you do, pump your septic tank at least once a year. (*Note: Use of garbage disposals increases solids loading by about 50 percent!*)\*
- Have leaking faucets, toilets or other plumbing fixtures.
- Pour grease or food scraps down the drain.
- Use "large" amounts of chemicals such as chlorine bleach, disinfectants or antibacterial cleaners.
- Have a "laundry day" for a whole week of dirty laundry.
- Deposit coffee grounds, disposable diapers, sanitary products, paints, thinners, paper towels,....
- Plant trees or bushes over or near the system.
- Cover the system with a driveway or patio.
- Overload the system with too much water, including water from a sprinkler system.

## **Do.....**

- Have septic tanks pumped every 3 to 5 years.
- Routinely check float valves on all toilets. They can leak with no detectable sound.
- Keep a separate container for grease and dispose of properly.
- Use detergents low in phosphates and liquid detergents that contain less fillers.
- Use toilet paper that advertises safe for septic systems.
- Spread laundry loads over several days so as not to overload the system with too much water.
- Divert surface drainage away from septic system.
- Avoid driving over septic tank and septic field (disposal lines).
- Use water-saving devices such as low-flow showerheads and low-flush toilets.
- Install an effluent filter the next time the tank is pumped.
- Plant grass over the disposal field.
- Call the Brown County Health Department (812-988-2255) whenever you experience problems with your septic system.

**Remember, by maintaining your septic system, you protect your pocketbook, the health of your family, your community and your environment.**

\*from Bulletin ID-142 Operating and Maintaining the Home Septic System, Purdue University Cooperative Extension Service