

# Maintaining Your Septic System



Did you know that as a homeowner you're responsible for maintaining your septic system? Maintaining your septic system protects your investment in your home. Proper maintenance involves inspecting your septic system

and periodically pumping out your septic tank.

If properly designed, constructed and maintained, your septic system can provide long-term, effective treatment of household wastewater. If your septic system isn't maintained, you might need to replace it, costing you thousands of dollars. A malfunctioning system can contaminate groundwater that might be a source of drinking water. And if you sell your home, your septic system must be in good working order.

## Saving Money

A key reason to maintain your septic system is to save money. Failing septic systems are expensive to repair or replace, and poor maintenance is often the culprit. Having your septic system inspected regularly is a bargain when you consider the cost of replacing the entire system. Your system will need pumping depending on how many people live in your house and the size of the system. An unusable septic system or one in disrepair will lower your property value and could pose a legal liability.

## Protecting Health and the Environment

Other good reasons for safe treatment of sewage include preventing the spread of

infection and disease and protecting water resources. Typical pollutants in household wastewater are nitrogen, phosphorus, and disease-causing bacteria and viruses. If a septic system is working properly, it will effectively remove most of these pollutants. With one-fourth of U.S. homes using septic systems, more than 4 billion gallons of wastewater per day is dispersed below the ground's surface. Inadequately treated sewage from septic systems can be a cause of groundwater contamination. It poses a significant threat to drinking water and human health because it can contaminate drinking water wells and cause disease and infection in people and animals. Improperly treated sewage that contaminates nearby surface waters also increases the chance of swimmers contracting a variety of infectious diseases. These range from eye and ear infections to acute gastrointestinal illness and diseases like hepatitis.

## Four Things You Can Do to Protect Your Septic System

1. Inspect your system regularly and pump your tank as necessary.
2. Use water efficiently.
3. Don't dispose of household hazardous wastes in sinks or toilets.
4. Care for your drainfield.

Visit our web site at [www.CleanWaterways.org](http://www.CleanWaterways.org) to get a copy of our newest literature on how to keep your septic system, save money, and avoid health risks. 💧



"It isn't pollution that's harming the environment. It's the impurities in our air and water that are doing it."

- Dan Quayle

# Eco Friendly Advice for Healthy Lawns & Greenspace



Lush beautiful lawns are a part of summer, but they require time and money. The average lawn requires up to 40 hours of work and costs about \$700 each year to maintain. But did you know that your yard and how you take care of it can help the environment?

A thick full lawn reduces soil erosion, filters contaminants from rainwater and absorbs airborne pollutants like dust and soot. Grass is also great at converting carbon dioxide to oxygen. The following are tips suggested by the EPA to help homeowners have yards that are beautiful and environmentally friendly.

## Ways to keep your lawn looking its best

- Set your mower height 2½ to 3½ inches. Longer grass has more leaf surface which enables the grass to take in more sunlight and develop a deeper root system, making your lawn more drought and insect resistant. Longer grass also helps soil retain moisture and cuts down on the need to water. Mow often, but never cut more than a third of the length.
- Leaving grass clippings on your yard can reduce the need for pesticides and fertilizers. Grass clippings are about 90% water, will decompose quickly and provide nourishment back to the soil. They save landfill space too. Between 20 and 40 percent of landfill space is taken up by yard waste. Landfills produce methane gas which contributes to climate change.
- Lawns grow best in an intermediate soil that is a mix of clay, sand and silt. You can always improve the quality of any type of soil by fertilizing. Instead of chemicals, add organic matter like compost, manure or grass clippings to the soil for nourishment.
- Consider reducing the size of your lawn by Greenscaping. Greenscaping makes use of native plant species as ground cover and provides a landscape that is more similar to natural habitats.
- Planning your Greenscape can be creative and fun. Consider planting a wildflower meadow or use native perennials to provide color and ground cover near trees, patios and fences.
- Your local nursery or County Agricultural Extension office can help you identify plants that will flourish in your area. Native plants require far less fertilization and are more resistant to insects, reducing the need for pesticides. 💧

Have a **Question?**

We have the **Answer!**

Read the **FAQs**

Visit our web site for useful information that you can use. Topics include:

- Watersheds
- Stormwater
- Drain Systems
- Water Pollution
- Storm Water Quality

For kids, our web site will help you learn what you can do to keep our water clean. Residents can go to our web site to request speakers for community events, and overall public education.

Professionals in construction, development, and industrial can learn about storm water requirements, storm water quality control, and storm water management.

Visit our web site today!

[www.CleanWaterways.org](http://www.CleanWaterways.org)



## Just for Floats!

Did you know that more water is used in the bathroom than any other place in the home?

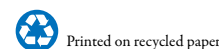
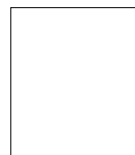
Did you know that water regulates the Earth's temperature. It also helps regulate the temperature of the human body?

Did you know that the average total home water use for each person in the U.S. is about 50 gallons a day?

Did you know that a dripping faucet can waste up to 2,000 gallons of water a year?



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# CURRENTS

[www.CleanWaterways.org](http://www.CleanWaterways.org)

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## Recycling Computers Just Got Easier

Consumers in the state of Texas will have an easier way of disposing their old computers while protecting the environment. The Texas Legislature and the TCEQ have adopted the Computer Equipment Recycling Program which requires that all manufacturers provide for the collection of computer equipment for recycling. Starting September 1, 2008 manufacturers that sell computer equipment in Texas will be required to collect and recycle computer equipment purchased primarily for personal or home-business use.

The collection and recycling will be free to all consumers who wish to dispose of the computer equipment such as:

- Monitors
- Desktop Computers
- Laptop Computers
- Keyboards
- Mouse



Each manufacturer is responsible only for its own brand of computer equipment. If you are interested in recycling your computer equipment before September 1, 2008, check your manufacturer's web site to see what recycling options are currently offered. Or check the following Web sites for places that currently accept computer equipment for recycling, but possibly charge a fee: [Cleanup.org](http://Cleanup.org) or [RecycleTexasOnline.com](http://RecycleTexasOnline.com).

Keeping electronics out of our landfills and watersheds is a great way to help the environment. There are hazardous materials such as lead, mercury, and chromium in circuit boards, batteries, and color cathode ray tubes (CRTs). Televisions and CRT monitors contain four pounds of lead, on average. Mercury from electronics has been cited as a leading source of mercury in municipal waste.

Remember that reusing and recycling the raw materials from end-of-life electronics conserves natural resources and minimizes air and water pollution, as well as greenhouse emissions that are caused by manufacturing new products. Start recycling today and save our environment.

## Calendar of Events

### Household Hazardous Waste Collection Events:

**September 27, 2008**

Household Hazardous Waste  
Collection Event  
Annex 13 and Sports Complex  
I-10 and Barker Cypress  
8:00 AM - 2:00 PM

**November 15, 2008**

Household Hazardous Waste  
Collection Event  
Sam Houston Race Track  
8:00 AM - 2:00 PM

### Hazmobile Events:

**October 11, 2008**

*Hazmobile Events*  
Tom Bass Pct. 1 Park  
9:00 AM - 12:00 Noon

Jed's Ace Home Center  
Alide Mail Rt and 59  
9:00 AM - 12:00 Noon



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