



LANDSCAPING YOUR SEPTIC DRAINFIELD

PROTECT YOUR INVESTMENT

Your septic system is an investment. A functioning drainfield is critical because it treats your sewage. It is important to know where your septic system is located so you can protect your investment. We can provide a copy of your records, or you can search using the on-line database at www.kitsappublichealth.org.

TIPS FOR LANDSCAPING THE DRAINFIELD

- Drainfield components may only be six inches deep. Avoid rototilling and deep digging. Look out for filter fabric, drain lines, or drain rock when planting. Keep extra water away from the drain field, (e.g. rain gardens, downspouts, irrigation, etc.)
- Keep cars, livestock, pavement and buildings off the drainfield area.
- Avoid trenching and keep drains, sprinkler system or retaining walls at least 30 feet away from the septic system.
- Never cover any part of the drainfield with landscape plastic.
- Protect septic caps and lids when mowing, but do not cover them with heavy or permanent objects.

Choose low-maintenance and low-water use plants

Low-maintenance plants minimize soil disturbance. Plants that require a lot of water can saturate the drainfield and reduce the soil's ability to treat your wastewater.

Choose shallow-rooted plants. Plants with deep roots can clog and break septic tanks, pipes and other components.

Lawn is the ideal cover for drainfields because it is easy to maintain and repair. Lawn thrives in full sun conditions. Water only one inch per week during the summer.



KITSAP PUBLIC
HEALTH DISTRICT

345 6th Street
Suite 300
Bremerton, WA 98337

360-728-2235
360-813-1379 (fax)
kitsappublichealth.org

Recommended ground cover plants: blue star creeper, carpet heathers, *coastal strawberry, epimedium, ground ivy, pachysandra, periwinkle, *wild ginger and *wintergreen. Master gardeners and WSU Kitsap County Extension can provide detailed information about plants for sun or shade.

**Northwest native plant*

Trees / large shrubs

Trees and shrubs generally have extensive root systems that seek out water and can grow into drainfields. When planting trees and shrubs, remember that roots can spread the same distance from a plant as the height of the plant. Plant trees at least 30 feet away from the drainfield.

Western red cedar, alder, redwood, poplar, maple and willow trees seek out water. These should be avoided or planted a minimum of 50 feet away.

Growing vegetables or fruits over a drainfield is not recommended

It is not recommended to grow vegetables or fruit trees over a drainfield because they need regular heavy watering and they can come into contact with sewage in the drainfield. Rototilling or deep digging can also damage septic system pipes.

Plants to avoid: English ivy, blackberry and other noxious weeds, native sword ferns and pampas grass. These plants have dense massive roots.

RESOURCES

Kitsap Public Health District

345 6th Street, Suite 300

Bremerton, WA 98337

360-728-2235

www.kitsappublichealth.org

Washington State University Kitsap County Extension

<http://ext100.wsu.edu/kitsap/>

Master Gardeners

http://county.wsu.edu/kitsap/gardening/Pages/Master_Gardeners.aspx

Kitsap County Noxious Weed Program

<http://ext100.wsu.edu/kitsap/nrs/noxious/>

Kitsap Conservation District rain garden program

<http://kitsapcd.org/programs/raingarden-lid>

