



Lake George Association

People Protecting the Lake Since 1885

NEWS RELEASE

Contact: Lynne Rosenthal
Communications Coordinator
518-668-3558
lrosenthal@lakegeorgeassociation.org

For IMMEDIATE RELEASE

New Advice, Approaches for Safe Septic System Landscaping

LAKE GEORGE, NY – (June 24, 2011) -- Ever wonder if you could do more on your septic drain field than just plant grass? You can. The Lake George Association has recently published a new public informational flyer entitled Septic System Landscaping. The publication provides safe guidelines for placing a septic tank and drainfield, and explains why plants are important to a well-functioning system. In addition, the flyer lists the best plant varieties to use, and encourages property owners to include shallow-rooted herbaceous plants that are not water-loving. Certain wildflowers, such as oxeye sunflower, smooth aster, wild columbine and wild blue lupine are ideal. A complete list of possibilities is included in the flyer.

The flyer is available for free download from the LGA website: www.lakegeorgeassociation.org. (Scroll down in the "WHAT'S NEW" box on the right.) or by contacting the LGA at 518-668-3558 or info@lakegeorgeassociation.org.

The LGA would also like to remind residents of Bolton, Diamond Point and Silver Bay that half-price septic system pump-outs are available through a new program this summer. To be eligible, homeowners must have an individual septic tank and must live within 500 feet of the Lake. This program will assist homeowners with water conservation practices and septic system maintenance, and is provided through a partnership between the LGA, the Warren County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD), and the Lake Champlain-Lake George Regional Planning Board. Each participant will receive a water conservation kit including a low-flow toilet bag, low-flow showerhead, low-flow faucet aerator, educational materials and onsite septic system contact information. Funding for this program is limited, so if you are interested in participating please contact Beth Gilles at (518) 668-5773.

It is recommended that a septic system be pumped every 3 – 5 years for maximum benefit to the system, and to minimize health and water quality impacts. The LGA provides information on Lake George septic system design, including alternative designs, and septic system maintenance, on its website, and staff is always available to provide technical support.

About the LGA

The LGA is a non-profit membership organization of people interested in working together to protect, conserve, and improve the beauty and quality of the Lake George Basin. It is the nation's oldest lake association. For more information, contact the LGA at (518) 668-3558 or visit the LGA website at www.lakegeorgeassociation.org.

Opportunities for Lake-friendly Living
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Septic System Landscaping

Plan Ahead to Protect Your Septic System
Landscape design should not interfere with the natural function of your system. Examine your yard with the future in mind. Do you have plans for constructing storage sheds, decks, patios or other structures? Construction on or near your septic system could damage the tank, pipes or soil. The septic tank and drainfield should remain clear of sprinkler lines, decks, patios, storage sheds, sand boxes, swing sets, paved or dirt driveways, parking areas and walkways. Make sure runoff is not directed toward the system either.

Planting your Drain Field (aka Leach Field or Mound)
There are many reasons to plant on your drain field. Plants can help your septic drain field to function at its best by removing moisture and nutrients from the soil. Plant cover is also important to reduce soil erosion. Covering your septic area with plastics, bark, gravel, or patio blocks set in sand won't give your septic system the same benefits as planting and is not recommended.

Plants help the drain field do its job
A permanent vegetation cover over a drain field minimizes topsoil loss to erosion. Plants enhance the system by removing moisture and nutrients from the soil. Open sites are more susceptible to frost heaving and erosion. Plants trap snow which acts as insulation over the winter.

- Use plants that do not like water or wet soils and that have non-aggressive roots. Roots can cause serious damage to drain fields by clogging or breaking pipes.
- Grass or a mix of grass and perennial flowers are both good choices for landscaping drain fields.
- Do not place trees and shrubs on the drain field; they may be planted around it at a minimum of 20 feet from the edge.
- Trees known for being thirsty; such as poplar, maple, willow, elm, beech, and birch, are not good choices for landscaping around a drain field. If you really want them for some reason, they should be planted at least 50 feet away.
- Avoid irrigation and fertilization on a drain field; in fact, never plan to irrigate this area. Use plants that can withstand dry conditions.
- Do not plant edible plants, such as vegetables and herbs on a mound or drain field.

Mark Your Septic Components for Easy Access
Maintenance is easier when your components are well marked and easily accessible. You can use attractive markers for your septic components such as planters, sun dials, sculptures, wishing wells, benches, or bird feeders to mark septic components that need regular inspection. Moving a marker to access a septic port is much easier than digging around in your yard to locate the port for inspection!

When planting on or near a septic drain field always wear gloves to reduce contact with the soil, limit compaction, and plant areas of exposed soil as soon as possible to minimize erosion.

And if show possible placements for a mound.

Learn more about how you can help protect Lake George.
www.lakegeorgeassociation.org

Picture caption: A new informational flyer for the public on Septic System Landscaping is available as a free download from the Lake George Association. Visit www.lakegeorgeassociation.org or call 518-668-3558 to receive your copy.



Picture caption: Alternative peat bio-filter septic systems, like the one pictured here, are one of several new septic landscaping technologies being used around Lake George. These systems are ideal for difficult sites – small lot-size, high bedrock – and provide superior wastewater treatment. Learn more on the LGA's website: www.lakegeorgeassociation.org.

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