

An alternative septic installation at a cottage.

Last Updated: Saturday, November 10th, 2012, Created: Friday, November 2nd, 2001

One viewer bought a cottage to discover that the septic system consisted of a tank in the basement that had to be pumped out all the time. They were on rocky terrain so a traditional septic tank and large leaching field would not work. Pumping out that tank, like with a house trailer, was a real hidden cost to this cottage. Happily, there are alternatives. A regular septic system collects the waste in a tank where it ferments and separates. Sludge sinks to the bottom, scum floats to the top and effluent flows out in-between. When the tank is pumped out occasionally, you are only getting rid of that accumulation of sludge and scum, the vast majority of stuff has gone out to the soil for natural disposal. That requires a soil that has some degree of sand in it, and enough distance down to the water table for natural bacterial action to "clean" the water before it reaches water table, wells or lakes and streams. In this TV segment we followed the installation of a Waterloo Biofilter System, where there is a standard septic tank for the initial fermentation and separation of materials, but then rather than a large leaching bed, the effluent is sprayed over hundreds of small foam cubes in large tanks. The cubes provide a surface for the bacteria to install and thrive and the effluent comes out the other end quite environmentally friendly. In fact the output from this is so clean that it can be distributed into a very small dispersal area, of raised soil if necessary, and it can then flow into nature just like rain water. It is not quite clean enough to drink directly, but the cubes have allowed nature to do its cleaning job as good as an extensive lot of sandy soil. If all cottage owners used systems like this, there would be no pollution problem on those lakes. Some of these systems are even being used in outlying suburbs where city services would be just too expensive and there is simply not enough land for a traditional system. The inventor of the system is the Waterloo Biofilter System from Rockwood, Ontario. This installation was done by Malloy Enterprises in Ontario.

Keywords:

Septic System, Cottage, Alternative, Toilets, Environmental, Plumbing