

The Ythan Project aims to involve local people in restoring, enhancing and improving the river. It is a partnership project which is supported by the European Commission's Life Environment Fund. Other project partners include Aberdeenshire Council, Forestry Commission Scotland, Formartine Partnership, Macaulay Land Use Research Institute, River Restoration Centre, Scottish Environment Protection Agency, Scottish Natural Heritage and the Ythan District Fishery Board.



The Grass is Always Greener.....

(over the septic tank!)



Further information on the project can be obtained from the project website at [www.ythan.org.uk](http://www.ythan.org.uk) or by ringing 01358 726411.

For general information on septic tank issues contact either Scottish Water on 0845 6018855 or the Scottish Environment Protection Agency on 01346 510502



This leaflet has been designed by the Ythan Project to give you more information on how septic tanks work, and how to maintain them. It is being sent to addresses in the Ythan river catchment area which are listed as having a septic tank. We hope you find the information useful, but if you'd like more information, please contact us (details on back page).

## How a Septic Tank works:

Wastewater flows from your house into the septic tank where settling occurs. The heavier solids (e.g. organic waste) sink to the bottom of the tank and are gradually digested by bacteria in the absence of air to form a sludge layer. Liquid above the sludge layer drains away from the tank into a soakaway or stream. Over time the sludge layer becomes thicker and eventually has to be removed by being pumped out.



## How should I maintain my tank?

Because you can't see it, it's easy to forget about having a tank, but regular maintenance is important to keep it working well. The number of people living in the house and how much water you use will affect how often the tank needs to be pumped out / emptied, but in general, most tanks need to be emptied every 2 years or so. If you can see where the liquid from the tank is draining out, you can check whether or not it is a light grey colour, which indicates a healthy tank. If it includes solids, smells bad or has a fluffy grey fungus, then the tank needs attention!



## Septic Tank - Dos and Don'ts

Things you do inside and outside the house can help or hinder your tank:

### Do:

- ◆ Use mild detergents, toilet fresheners, washing powders etc in MODERATE amounts, which won't upset the bacterial balance of the tank.
- ◆ Try using less detergent than at present in your washing machine, dishwasher etc - you might surprise yourself by finding that half a measure / half a tablet works just as well as a full one, particularly in the soft water around here.
- ◆ Use disinfectants if necessary, but use as little as possible

### Don't :

- ◆ Flush ANYTHING other than human waste, toilet paper and water down the toilet. Anything else should be bagged and binned.
- ◆ Dispose of grease or cooking oil down the kitchen sink - pour them into containers, and dispose of them in a bin.
- ◆ Put paint brush cleaning liquids, garden chemicals or other harsh chemicals down the drain.
- ◆ Connect rainwater drainage pipes (e.g. roof guttering down spouts) to drains leading into your septic tank