

Septic System Additives or Cleaners

The University of Minnesota, Extension Services states:

The general rule of thumb is if septic system additives, cleaners, starters or feeders are safe to use, they are probably not effective; and if they are effective, they are probably not safe to use. There is no quick fix or good substitute for proper septic tank operation and regular maintenance. The University of Minnesota, their Extension Services, along with wastewater industry leaders have developed an extensive homeowner education network.

This in-depth information can be accessed via their web page:

<http://septic.umn.edu/homeowner/index.html>

Their research resulted in the statement that additives are not necessary; we feed the system every time we use it. A proper operating and maintained on-site septic system will maintain its own healthy environment for the active component of a septic system to thrive: bacteria population. The live bacteria activity within the septic tank assures separation in the tank (see septic system purpose page), which allows only filtered effluent to exit the tank out to the drain field, or leach field. This, by design, keeps the pores of the drain field free of solids for optimal septic system operation.

Additives that kill bacteria or agitate the solids only suspend them, which allow the solids to migrate into the leach field, thus clogging the pores. This can result in the need for a costly replacement of the entire soil treatment system.

They caution that some additives, particularly degreasers, may cause carcinogens. These cancer-causing agents can flow directly into the leach field, and into the groundwater. No one wants to take that risk in his or her own back yard.

EPA or USDA approval of additives means the product contains no hazardous materials. It does not mean the product is effective at what the manufacturer claims it will do.

Please contact our educated staff at 603-225-9057 or 1-800-287-9057, for more information.