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Front Page

August 23, 2007

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New septic systems may alleviate old problems

Alternative systems could reduce pooling, clogs, premature failure
BY JANE MEGGITT Staff Writer

UPPER FREEHOLD - The owner of a septic company shared his views about alternative systems after the township's Board of Health approved an ordinance to regulate them at its Aug. 14 meeting.

Jason Luty owns A-Norton Septic Contracting in Old Bridge and does a lot of septic system work in Upper Freehold and the surrounding area. He said the alternative septic system that his company uses is called a peat moss bio filter.

"The septic effluent travels through the septic tank and into the peat moss filter tank," Luty said. "When the effluent leaves the peat tank, it is over 95 percent treated."

The benefit of the alternative system for the homeowner is that it reduces the distance the drain field has to be above the water table by about 30 inches, he said.

"Therefore, in many cases it reduces the need to have a mounded-type system," Luty said.

Another benefit of the peat moss system is that it does not clog up a drain field due to the peat tank acting as a treatment zone rather than the usual sand, he said.

Luty said the alternative tank is accessible and easily maintained, whereas the sand under the stone in a conventional system is not.

In Luty's opinion, systems built after 1990 - when the last major septic system revisions were enacted - seem to have problems because of the sand used.

"The sand in many cases contains too much fine material - silt and minerals - that cause a clogging mat beneath the stone and pipe work into the drain field," he said. "The result is pooling or ponding in the drain field and, in many cases, on the ground surface."

Luty said problems also occur in septic system use when owners abuse the systems or do not keep up with their maintenance.

"In many cases, proper cleaning is not regularly performed along with things such as grease, paint, water softeners, sump pumps and antibacterial products being discharged into the system," he said.

With regard to maintenance, Luty said, the peat system requires an annual raking and inspection. He said the average life of peat moss media is about 12-15 years.

Luty said a peat moss system is good for restaurants and delis because it does not allow grease and waste to pass into the drain field, eliminating the risk for premature failure that is often associated with traditional systems. He said that an Upper Freehold business that had its traditional system fail, requiring almost daily pumping, is now installing a peat moss system.

"The peat is easily changed and [costs] a lot less money than a drain field,"

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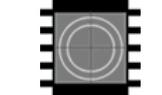
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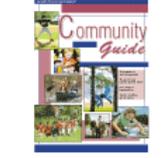
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