

House Works: Restoring a septic system without digging; using solar blinds



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Video



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Q: Is there something easier than a full rebuild to get my sluggish, 40-year-old septic system working properly? I know you've written about using an additive called Septicleanse. Will this solve the poor performance?

A: Back in 2012, I wrote about Septicleanse used in my 25-year-old septic system, and though the product did help initially, the system still wasn't working properly after nearly two years and three Septicleanse treatments. That's when I decided to do more research.

I've since discovered a generic approach to fixing lazy septic systems that has restored almost like-new performance in about three weeks, all without digging. It has to do with aeration of the second half of the tank.

Normally, septic systems operate without oxygen (that's what "septic" means), but companies now sell air pumps and bubblers that allow air to be bubbled through the sewage, changing it from an oxygen-free environment to an oxygen-rich one. The theory is that oxygen-type bacteria break down the sludge and slime that ordinarily clog the system in time, allowing it to flow freely again.

Rather than buy a bubbler system at a cost of \$1,000 to \$1,800, I found a supply of air bubble tubing online from a Canadian supplier (canadianpond.ca) and hooked up 15 feet of it to my workshop air compressor as a test.

In three weeks, the sewage levels in my tank went from as high as 10 inches above the top of the tank during heavy use to eight inches below the underside of the tank – just like it's supposed to be. It's the first time this has happened in three years, so I'm really happy.

Now that the approach has proven itself, I'll install a proper air pump, rather than continue to use my air compressor. I've heard about other success stories, too, so I'm convinced that converting septic systems to aerobic operation works extremely well. New systems are being installed now with air bubblers, too.