

# The Vegetative Tertiary Filter System

## A solution to septic challenges at lakefront homes

"A charming cottage in a beautiful waterfront setting on a site famous for its gardens" was the real estate description. The added clause "could use some updating" proved to be a significant understatement as we have diligently repaired and renovated the house and patiently restored the garden features.

Recently we decided to begin a restoration of the stream and lakeshore to bring the stream channel and native vegetation back to its natural state. As a part of the project, it was



**For edible landscape design,  
Installation and / or  
maintenance...  
Jonathan Francoeur:**

find me in person in the Herb Garden at 505 Quale Rd. every Wednesday morning or write to [familyoffarmers@mail.com](mailto:familyoffarmers@mail.com) or leave a message at 250-383-5144 box 3019

important to insure the water quality of the creek and water table was protected and an examination of the entire septic system was undertaken. The investigation revealed an archaic system installed in the 1940's and completely inappropriate to today's standards.

Lengthy research and consultation followed as we attempted to find a satisfactory solution to our problem. The property has unique issues as it is largely floodplain, falls entirely within the Streamside and Environmental Protection Area and is also regulated by the Saanich no-fill by-law. Proposals for a septic field to service our small home required a gravel field 70' X 25' and were not acceptable under Saanich bylaws nor to our desire to protect the established trees and rhododendrons in the garden. A referral to CK Ventures provided the solution. This company specializes in challenging sites and utilizes the Vegetative Tertiary Filter System, a peat based wastewater management system. The highly absorbent peat allows for a small field typically 10' X 10' and composed of organic material. It is the most biologically advanced, yet mechanically simple system available, consisting of the primary treatment septic tank, the treatment plant and the Vegetative Tertiary Filter.

Peat can have over 1,000 times the surface area of a grain of sand and it is this surface area that allows for the small footprint of the septic field. It is the extensive surface area of the peat that provides attachment space for microbes to consume and break down the compounds found in domestic waste water, preventing the contamination of surface and ground waters.

In addition to the legal limitations or site involved a sloping area of the garden with no access for machines or vehicles. The crew from CK Ventures hauled the 30 bales of peat from the nearest access point, carefully moved established plants, hand dug the rocky site for the treatment plant and assisted in the reconstruction of the original garden area. Initially I was surprised by the pride that this group demonstrated in the installation of a septic system however I have developed a new appreciation of a properly functioning system and, as many of my neighbours are aware, will happily provide a tour of our new state of the art (and science) septic system.

*By Wynona Pugh  
Member, PLDCA, PLPS*



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For more information, please email Jane at [maplelandingrabbits@shaw.ca](mailto:maplelandingrabbits@shaw.ca) or call 250-478-8136.