

SEPTIC LANDSCAPING AND PLANTINGS

Glendon Biofilters

This system has a septic tank and a pump tank like other systems and uses pressure distribution of the effluent. Concrete basins filled with layers of mineral filters take the place of the typical, in the ground, leach field. These basins have a lip above ground level and are mounded several feet above the lip with sand and not with soil.

The “mounds” are the most conspicuous feature of this type of a system. Generally when installed they are covered over with a fibrous, biodegradable netting and often seeded with white clover.

Many homeowners block off the view of the mound area with hedge plantings or decorative fencing. Care should be taken that the plants chosen for a hedge should be kept about 4 feet away from the mounds to allow for maintenance of both the mounds and the hedge. The plants chosen should not have aggressive runners or roots. Avoid hedges of any of the native evergreen trees such as Western Redcedar and Hemlock. The laurels should also be avoided. Use more “friendly” plants such as the California Wax myrtle (*Myrica californica*) or smaller, slower growing boxwoods. The wax myrtle will grow tall and will need to be pruned.

It is desirable to plant the mounds with a ground cover type of plant to prevent erosion of the sand and to help them blend into the landscaping. There are many ground cover plants available in the nurseries and their tags will tell you which are suitable for sun or shade.

Some plants that are suitable for a ground cover on the mounds:

Coastal strawberry * (*Fragaria chiloensis*)
Kinnikinnick* (*Arctostaphylos uva-ursi*)
Wintergreen (*Gaultheria procumbens*)
Creeping rubus (*Rubus pentalobus*)
Sweet Woodruff * (*Galium odoratum*)
Dwarf periwinkle (*Vinca minor*)

Once your plants are in be prepared to weed the mounds until the plants fill in. Watering should only be needed for the first summer.

* Northwest native plants

Fay Linger
Kitsap County Master Gardener 2009