Septic Systems: Protection and Maintenance needs

Almost 40% of the homes in Bernardsville have private Septic Systems, Seepage Pits or Cesspools to manage their sewage and wastewater. When properly sized, designed, constructed and maintained, a septic system provides long-term effective treatment of household sewage and wastewater. However, when they are not properly protected and maintained, they can allow disease-causing particles to enter groundwater, and possibly enter drinking water supplies in nearby wells. Untreated wastewater containing Nitrogen and Phosphorus released into waterways can cause depletion of oxygen levels and impact fishing and recreational use (triggering algae blooms).

The Bernards Township Health Department has records for septic systems in Bernardsville, and some older systems with seepage pits and cesspools. If residents want more information on their home's septic system or have questions, they should contact the Bernards Township Health Department at 908-204-2520 or Health @Bernards.org. Please note that existing cesspools are grandfathered, but they must be upgraded as part of any real estate transfer. Septic systems need to be protected and maintained to avoid costly repairs or replacement.

Protection for Septic System, Seepage Pit or Cesspool:
- No grease, oil or coffee grinds down the drain or garbage disposal use.
- No wipes, sanitary products or non-biodegradable products down the drain.
- No hazardous waste down the drain (Be aware of contents in cleaners)
- Distribute heavy water usage (laundry and bathing)
- Do not drive or park over drainage field

Maintenance for Septic System, Seepage Pit or Cesspool:
- Pump Out Septic Tank every 3 Years and inspect system
- Rinse/Clean effluent filter every year
- Keep tree and shrub roots out of the drainage field area
- Keep roof drains, sump pumps and rainwater away from drainage field area

***Installations of garbage disposals, connections of sump pumps and downspouts to a septic system can overwhelm even a properly designed system.

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