



Be LakeSmart

Lakes Environmental Association



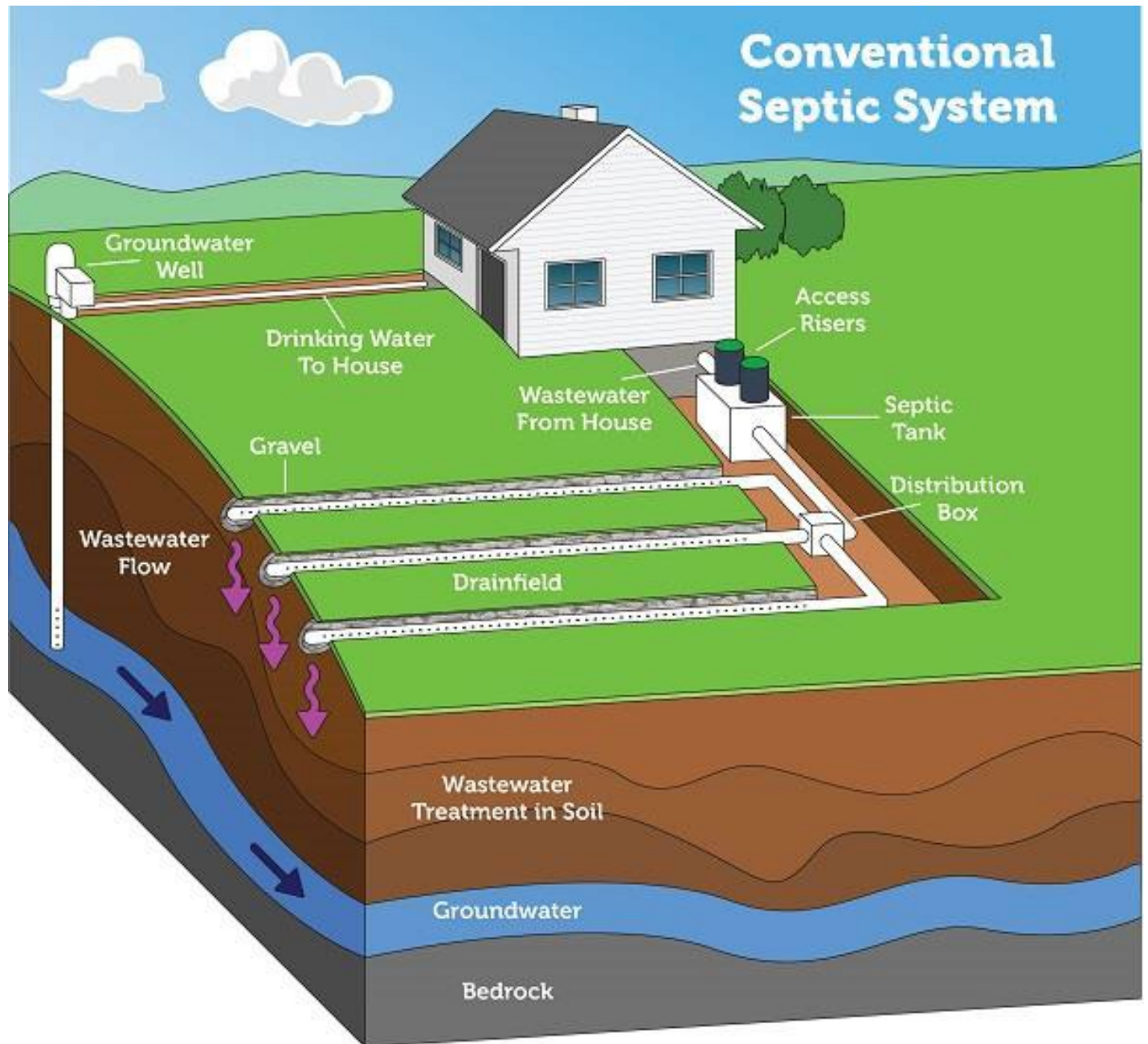
Septic *Dos*

- ✓ **Pump your tank on a regular schedule.**
The general recommendation is every 3-5 years, depending on use. Be sure to have your filter cleaned too (if you have one) when you have your system pumped.
- ✓ **Have the leach field inspected every five years** for older systems or those with trees nearby. Your service provider can scope the system or open up the leach field for inspection.
- ✓ **Remove woody vegetation such as tree saplings and shrubs from the leach field annually.**
Roots will intrude into the leach field, shortening its useful life and compromising effectiveness.
- ✓ **Limit the water entering your tank.** Excess water is a major cause of system failure.
 - Consider flushing only for solid reasons
 - Use low-flow faucets and shower heads
 - Fix toilets that run to save 25+ gallons per day
 - Space out loads of laundry, aim for one per day
- ✓ **Check for indications of septic system failure:**
 - Wastewater backing up into household drains
 - Water pooling near the tank or leach field
 - Strong odor around your septic system, especially after rain
 - Noticeably greener vegetation and/or wet and spongy vegetation over the leach field, even during dry weather

Septic *Don'ts*

- ✗ **Don't interfere with your septic tank's natural bacterial action** by putting any of the following down the drain or toilet:
 - No household cleaners
 - No drain cleaners
 - No gasoline or motor oil
 - No pesticides
 - No paint
 - No septic system additive (such as Rid-X)
 - Use bleach sparingly
- ✗ **Don't put anything down the drain or toilet which will not readily break down with bacterial action.**
 - No diapers
 - No dental floss
 - No medications
 - No menstrual products such as pads or tampons
 - No paper towels or baby wipes (including those advertised as “flushable”)
- ✗ **Don't use powdered soaps or detergents.** These products contain emulsifiers, which prevent fats from coagulating in the septic tank, and fillers that clog the pipes in the leach field.
- ✗ **Don't use a kitchen garbage disposal.** These machines introduce significantly more solids and grease into the tank

For more information about septic system care, visit www.lakes.me/septic or www.epa.gov/septic



Please note: Septic systems vary. Diagram is not to scale.

LakeSmart is a program of Maine Lakes run in the Lake Region by the Lakes Environmental Association. For more information, contact LEA at 207-647-8580 or visit www.minelakes.org/lakesmart.