Household & Automotive

Many household chemicals such as solvents, drain cleaners, oils, paints, pharmaceuticals, and pesticides can interfere with the proper operation of septic systems and can also lead to contamination of local water resources, including potentially your own well. Avoid disposing of these chemicals in the kitchen or bathroom sink, toilet, bathtub/shower, or in the trash:

- grease
- paint & thinner
- batteries
- strong acids
- strong bases
- ammonia
- antifreeze
- motor oil
- automotive fluids
- pharmaceuticals

If you are unsure of whether a particular chemical can be disposed of in a household drain, check the product label. If there is a warning about proper disposal, then it should not go down the drain. In addition, be sure to keep old oil tanks, leaky vehicles, lawn care and other noxious chemicals properly stored and ensure they are not leaking into the ground.

Many counties offer services to dispose of household chemicals appropriately. Chautauqua County periodically offers Household Hazardous Waste Collection days, when the county will accept many chemicals in limited quantities. For more information visit chautauquacountyny.gov/landfill

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Garden & Landscaping

Choices made about the care and maintenance of your garden, lawn and landscaping have the potential to impact drinking water quality. Here are a few ways that you can protect our shared drinking water resources:

- ✓ Consider landscaping with native plants, grasses, and flowers. Doing so can help reduce or eliminate the need for lawn chemicals altogether.
- ✓ Plant trees the appropriate distance from your septic system drain field to keep roots from growing into your septic system. A septic service professional can advise you on the proper distance, depending on your septic tank and surrounding landscape.
- ✓ Reduce the use of pesticides and herbicides and concentrate their use only to the specific areas of concern.
- ✗ Never park or drive on your septic system drainfield.
- ✓ Use mulch or compost on slopes to control erosion.
- ✗ Do not blow, sweep, hose, or rake leaves in the street, gutter, storm drain or lake.
- ✗ Do not mow down to the lakefront or let shrubs & tall grasses grow around your well head.

Pesticide, Fertilizer & Herbicide Use

When lawn care chemicals are over applied or stored where they can leak into the soil or run off the land surface, water quality is put under threat. Both wells pulling from groundwater and Chautauqua Lake from surface water runoff can become contaminated when chemicals are disposed of improperly.

- ✓ Use eco-friendly pesticides easily found at garden stores -- such as diatomaceous earth, neem oil, and insecticidal soap.
- ✗ Limit use of glyphosate-based herbicides such as RoundUp.
- ✓ Fertilizers applied to paved areas should be cleaned up immediately to reduce runoff.
- ✓ Read manufacturer labels and follow all directions.
- ✓ Fertilizing from May to June and September to October are the best times to get a green lawn and minimize pollution.
- ✓ Store pesticides and herbicides in a covered area. Dispose of leaking containers and outdated or banned products according to local regulations.
- ✗ Never apply or use lawn chemicals or fertilizers if a heavy rain or wind event is expected, and only apply them when the vegetation needs it.