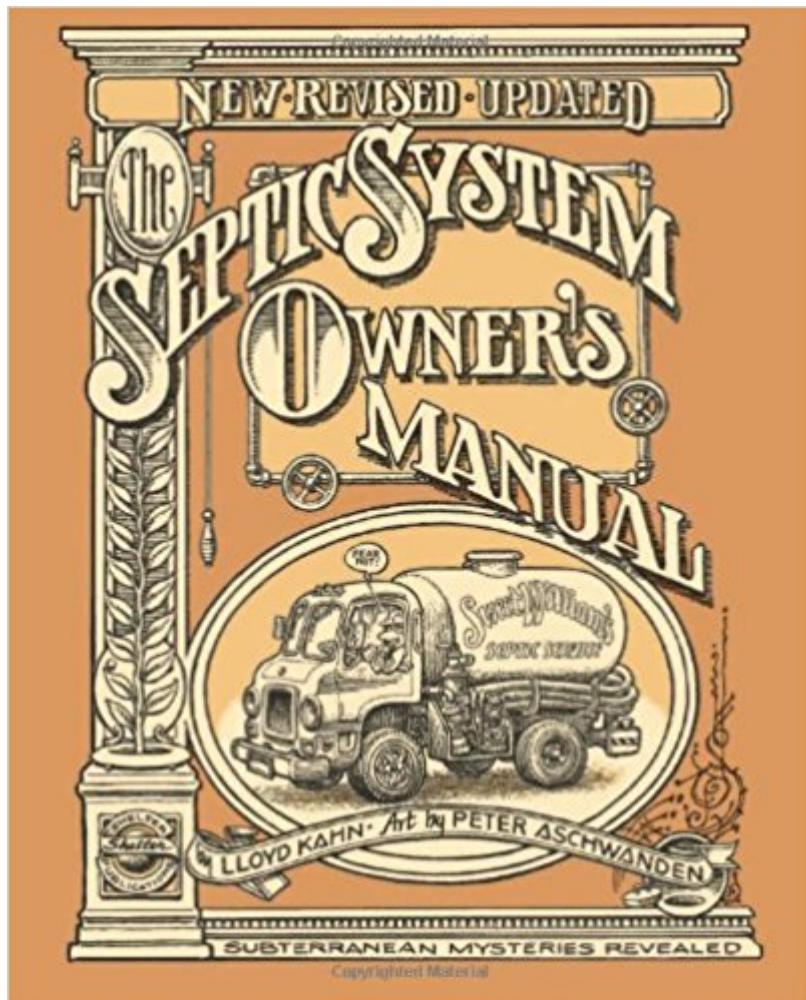


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# The Septic System Owner's Manual



## **Synopsis**

More than 28 million households have septic systems, but few homeowners know how they operate or how to maintain them. This clearly written, illustrated guide addresses that need, emphasizing conventional septic systems powered by gravity flow, filtering through soil, and the natural soil organisms that purify sewage. The book discusses maintenance, what to do if things go wrong, and alternative systems such as mounds and sand filters. Additional chapters cover graywater systems, composting toilets, and a unique history of water-borne waste disposal. This expanded edition contains three new chapters.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

This book is an essential tool for owners of homes with septic systems, or for people who are considering buying or building a home with a septic system. It is written in non-technical language and includes a plethora of illustrations, some of them humorous. It provides enough information so that reader can deal effectively with professionals, should that become necessary. While it mainly focuses on the traditional septic tank, it also describes many alternatives which can be used in situations where the standard tank may not be applicable. There is also an intriguing history of sanitation. I was fascinated to learn that there were flush toilets in the Indus Valley (now Pakistan) in 2500 BC! Also included is an extensive bibliography, including web sites, and a list of suppliers of various septic-related products.

The basics of septic systems, from underground systems and failures to what the owner can do to promote and maintain a healthy system, is revealed in an excellent guide essential for any who reside on a septic system. Rural residents receive a primer on not only the basics; but how to conduct period inspections and what to do when things go wrong. History also figures into the fine coverage.

I live just 40 Kms outside a city of 3.5 million people but the 20 acre properties means that a sewered system would be cost prohibitive. So we have a septic tank system. When you get one of these, there are few if any instructions so you learn by trial and messy error. This is a great book for those new owners and users of these systems. It is a simple list of what to do and what to avoid. I would highly recommend it to all septic system owners and users.

As a newbie to septic systems faced with having to build (or have built) a septic system, I checked out this book along with a couple others from our local library. This was the only one I fully read, and I liked it so much I bought myself a copy. I was first drawn to the book by the whimsical illustrations by Peter Aschwanden, but was hooked in by how accessible and informative the book was. We learned enough to ask intelligent questions of the contractor we eventually used to build our septic system. And, we learned a lot about the proper "care and feeding" of a septic system and now feel comfortable that we can treat ours in the proper manner to avoid septic troubles. Highly recommended for the present or future septic system owner!

The following is an update from my previous review of this book of approx 10 months ago): This book is essential in troubleshooting and repairing a septic system in a general sense. Since the mechanics of most septic systems are simple, most fixes end up being physically hard work, but are doable in layman terms. This book is one of the best out in the world. It's a must before spending a dime to fix and/or upgrade any septic application. However, really read the book. Do not forget that these systems have to meet local codes. If nothing causes the local inspector to have to take a look (i.e. property changes hands (probate, buying/selling) or a loss due to act of God and/or fire then you'll be fine. If you do not use a certified/bonded contractor for repairs (otherwords you do the work yourself) then be prepared to shell out some cash to bring it up to code if the afferntioned should happen. Having said this, page 147 is illuminating. The bibliography in the back lead me to some really interesting reading from 5 major univerities concerning the use of septic systems in the United

States! Good luck, you'll enjoy the book!!!

If you have a septic system, or plan to build a Septic System, get this book!! I learned the hard way, seeing sewage flowing out of my full new septic (?) into the country lane next to my house. I just built a house in the Andes, near Cusco, Peru, South America. I was American proud. Yes, I had the first septic system in the entire valley (that's right boys and girls, the first septic. Yes, all that raw sewage, from all of Peru's Andean communities, hundreds, if not thousands of villages and towns, flows directly into the streams and rivers of Peru). I was proud. For all my construction I hired a 30ish "degreed", civil engineer. For my "septic" he dug a deep, twelve foot hole and poured 16" thick cement for its walls, closed it with a metal lid and told me I had a septic. Months latter, this cement hole, filled up and overflowed. What he built was not a septic system, but a 12', cement lined, hole. When I had some local farmers help me dig a new septic/cesspool one of them said, "No mister, your engineer didn't know 'pooo' about septic" (a more exact word was used). He was right, but then, until this book, neither did I. If I had bought this book (or actually got an engineer who knew something) I would have saved myself a lot of anguish and smell. This is an excellent, basic primer on just about everything you will ever need to know about moving black water from your home to a world that the worms and bacteria love. Plus, the book has great sections on 'graywater' and composting toilet systems. Well written and very easy to understand. Plus, a unique chapter on the "History of Wastewater Disposal". I bet you can't wait for this late night reading.

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