

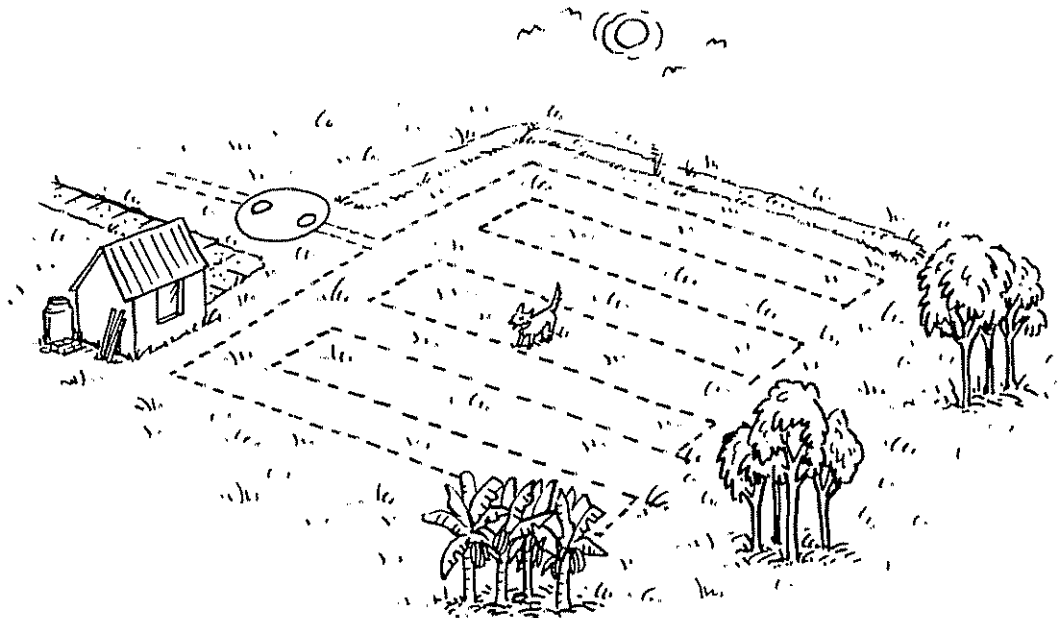
## How to keep your absorption trench working well

What can you do to fix a failed trench? It's best to contact your council or consult a septic system specialist (find them in the Yellow Pages).

In the meantime, there are some simple DOs and DON'Ts to help keep your absorption trench working well.

### Trench DOs

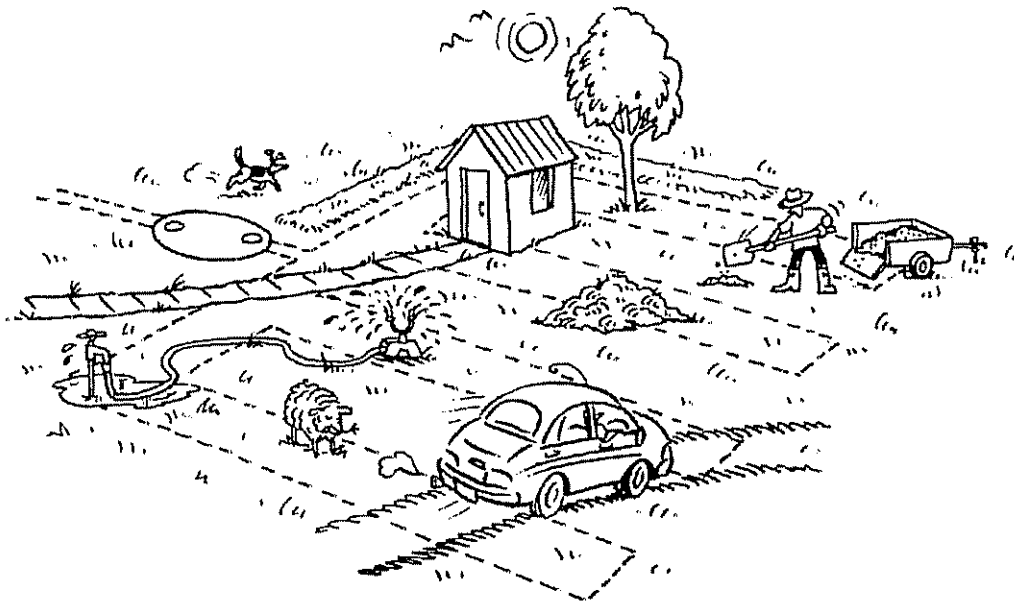
- Ensure that the proper soil tests are done to determine the type of absorption system to be used and how large it should be. A reserve effluent application area should also be identified in case a new trench system is needed later.
- Plant small trees or shrubs down-slope and away from your trench system to help absorb effluent. Use water-loving and shallow rooted plants, such as tropical palms, banana palms, poplars, paperbark trees and wetland plants. (See the plant list at the back of the booklet for some suitable native plants.)
- Consider installing a dual trench system so the separate trenches and soil areas can be rested alternately. They will perform better and last much longer. Dual disposal areas should be swapped over every 12 months or so.
- Build a small earth bund wall (a small ridge) about 15 cm high that is longer than, and uphill from the trench area to divert surface runoff water around it. This will help to reduce the load on your trench in wet weather.



*This is a well maintained absorption area.*

### **Trench DON'Ts**

- Do not drive over or disturb the stormwater diversion contour mounds.
- Do not build structures on the absorption trench or plant trees that will shade it. The area should be in full sun to help plant growth, evaporation and pathogen breakdown. Small trees should be planted at least 5m away, large trees should be over 20m away, if not the roots will harm the trench.
- Do not flood the disposal area with sprinklers or hoses.
- Do not drive cars on the trench area or graze animals there. Any heavy movement may break the pipework or the dome cover and will compress the soil. A small fence will let visitors know which areas to avoid.
- Do not cover the absorption trench area with concrete, pavers, etc.
- Do not store loads of soil or other materials on your absorption trench area.
- Do not place extra topsoil on top of your trench to 'soak up' overflowing effluent. If the trench area is soggy or water is pooling over the trench, it's best to call a plumber and have it checked.
- Do not let children play in the absorption trench area.



*Don't treat your absorption area like this.*