

How to Select a Residential Effluent Filter

Do I really need a filter in my septic tank?

An effluent filter keeps solids in the septic tank so they won't damage your treatment or disposal system. A filter is relatively inexpensive. Replacing a plugged-up sand filter or drainfield can be very expensive.

Sounds like good insurance. Is there a catch?

All filters need cleaning eventually. The real test is how often. No effluent filter is worth the investment if it needs to be cleaned too often. In fact, when frequent servicing gets to be a pain, homeowners tend to yank 'em and toss 'em.

So how often will it need to be cleaned?

You can't know for sure. It depends on several factors, including the number of people using the tank, food preparation and housekeeping habits, the size of the septic tank, whether the tank is water-tight, whether a garbage disposal or water softener is connected, and so on.

Can I make an educated guess?

Sure. Filter producers usually list sizing and maintenance requirements in their literature, but check the facts. If a manufacturer's claim seems too good to be true, it probably is. As you make your selection, be honest with yourself. Are you willing to clean a septic tank filter every six months or does every 5 years sound more reasonable?

Which filter is best?

Compare specifications. Flow area—the combined area of the perforations, or openings in the filter, through which liquid passes—must be sufficient or the filter will clog easily. *See the ratings chart below.*

Bottom line: How can I be sure I'm getting an effluent filter I can live with?

Choose one that's made of corrosion-resistant materials; then make sure it has a large flow area so that you minimize maintenance while you protect your septic system.

Ratings Residential Effluent Filter Comparison

Brand and Model	Flow Area (in ²)	0	50	100	150	200	250	Dia.	Height	Opening Size
Orengo 4" Biotube®	228							4"	36"	1/16" or 1/8" mesh
Orengo Biotube Jr.	114							4"	18"	1/16" or 1/8" mesh
Polylok PI-122	92							4"	19"	1/16" slots
Zoeller 170-0023	46							4"	24"	1/16" slots
Zabel - A1800	30							4"	17"	1/16" slots
SaniTee	26							4"	24"	1/8" slots

Rating Details

Orengo	Biotube® design using multiple tubes provides largest flow area
Polylok	Multi-sided slotted cartridge
Zoeller	Slotted PVC pipe
Zabel	3" diameter slotted cylinder
SaniTee	Diagonally slotted ABS pipe