Trees & Septics

Tree root invasion of septic tank absorption fields, drop boxes, and tanks is a long standing problem in the maintenance of on-site treatment systems. Many trees and shrubs readily invade these systems because they can provide air space, water and nutrients. Not all trees and shrubs invade septic systems. List here are a number of species and the likelihood of their roots invading septic systems. The list is not exhaustive but includes those plants for which there is reliable information.

Trees with roots rarely invading septic systems:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Common Name</th>
<th>Latin Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Norway Maple</td>
<td>Acer platanoides</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sugar Maple</td>
<td>Acer saccharum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White Ash</td>
<td>Fraxinus Americana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green Ash</td>
<td>Fraxinus pennsylvanica</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red Pine</td>
<td>Pinus resinosa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White Pine</td>
<td>Pinus Strobus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White Oak</td>
<td>Quercus alba</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bur Oak</td>
<td>Quercus macrocarpa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red Oak</td>
<td>Quercus rubra</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Shrubs with roots commonly invading septic systems:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Common Name</th>
<th>Latin Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gray Dogwood</td>
<td>Cornus racemosa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red-osier Dogwood</td>
<td>Cornus stolonifera</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autumn Olive</td>
<td>Elagagnus umbellate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forsythia</td>
<td>Forsythia spp.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common Buckthorn</td>
<td>Rhamnus cathartica</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pussy Willow</td>
<td>Salix discolor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sandbar Willow</td>
<td>Salix interior</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Information furnished by the Morton Arboretum

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