

DIG THIS by Peg Tillery (for 9-26-07) Peonies and Septic Systems © 2007

If you love peonies and irises you'll want to drive out to Kingston to Boone Brier Farm on Friday and Saturday October 5 and 6 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. both days. All of Boone Brier Farm's gorgeous peonies and irises are half price for the remaining containerized plants. Jim Mossman is also dividing the peony roots and he'll show you how to do it. You'll be able to take home a free root for your garden.

Peony leaves are especially colorful this time of year. You'll be able to experience the autumn charm of peony leaves. Boone Brier Farm is at 11067 NE Arness Road in Kingston. You can call 360-297-7431 or email boonebrierfarm@centurytel.net if you have any questions. Don't forget to visit the website at www.boonebrierfarm.com to see lovely photos of the peonies and irises for sale through the nursery. You can place orders online. The 2007 root orders will be ready to pick up during the weekend of October 5 and 6 or at other times before October 12.

Over the last few weeks, Jodie Holdcroft from the Kitsap Health District and I have been giving a series of talks on landscaping and caring for your septic systems (also known as Onsite Sewage Systems or OSS). Jodie enjoys telling people how they can keep their systems healthy. She and her fellow co-workers actually get excited when they can help homeowners make sense out of caring for their septic systems.

Jodie and I want people to know the best plants to use over their drain fields and how they can disguise those green circular lids. She, I, Lance Hale and Fay Linger even starred in an episode of the Kitsap Gardener to help people know what an OM (Operation and Maintenance) contract does and how to disguise those "elephant burial mounds" as Fay calls the GlenDon System mounds. The DVD is available to check out and watch through Kitsap Regional Library.

Jodie and I are available to present two and a half hour talks to groups of twenty or more people. The talks include a copy of OSS as-built drawing for each person's property. Providing this drawing is absolutely free to Kitsap County residents. When do we ever get anything for free? The talks we present are free too. Such a deal.

One of the best things to put over your drain field if you have a traditional system (not a mound or GlenDon) is a lawn or some kind of ground cover. You will want to only fertilize your lawn about two times a year (April and September) and you will want to only water it one inch a week during the dry weather and when needed at other times. Plants over your drain field need to be shallow-rooted plants. Jodie and I are compiling a list of plants that have been used successfully in Kitsap County over drain fields and on GlenDon systems. The list will be posted on the Extension and Health District websites and available by request in the offices. Avoid planting trees in your drain field because roots like to grow into the drainage pipes and can create problems. You will also want to keep curtain drains and other drainage pipes out of your drain field. A properly running and healthy system is your best friend.

If you have questions about plants and landscaping over drainfields and around your septic system contact the Extension Office at 360-337-7157. For questions about your system contact Jodie Holdcroft or the Health District at 360-337-5629.