

Using EM or Activated EM in Septic Systems

Benefits

Too numerous to mention in this short document.

Time Until You See Results

Some things, such as odor control, may happen very quickly. Other things, such as sludge reduction, may take weeks to several months, and may even temporarily get worse as old sludge from the bottom of the tank is released.

Warning

If you are dealing with a full or clogged septic system, it is best to consult an expert. Improper use of EM can create problems in these situations, as the EM will loosen old sludge that may cause more clogging.

Partially-Filled Septic System

There are varying suggestions from reputable sources about application rates. I have seen 1:1000, 1:5000, 1:10000, and even as high as 1:30000 EM:septic waste. So I don't know, perhaps start with 1:5000. For example, if you have a tank with 5000 litres of waste, use 1 litre of EM (diluted approximately 1:10 with water, so 10 litres of water in this case). It will work even better if the EM is mixed with an equal amount of blackstrap molasses, so 1:1:10 EM:molasses:water. It is helpful if the water is warm in this case to dissolve the molasses. Note that EM should be used within 24 hours of dilution, or it will start to go bad.

Repeat this procedure again. One source says to do it once a week for a month and then once a month thereafter. Another source says to do it once every three months. Eventually, you may decide to do it at a more diluted rate, such as 1:10000. Ideally, it would be done as ongoing maintenance.

Clogged System

It can take at least a few months, but through regular additions of EM, a clogged tank can be cleared up. The one source I have for this says to mix 1/2L of EM with 1/2L of blackstrap molasses in 2L of warm water and add it daily to whatever drain has a bit of flow.

Storage

EM can easily store for over a year, and even several years. Cooler room temperatures will keep it longer (10-20C is optimal). Store it in the dark, with the lid tight. When you begin to use it, it is best to use it all within a couple of months, as the air space at the top of the container will shorten the storage time. Consider activating first to save money.