

TREES AND SEPTICS

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Tree root invasion of septic tank absorption fields, drop boxes, and tanks is a long standing problem in the maintenance of on-site wastewater 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, however. Listed here are a number of species and the likelihood of their root invading septic systems. The list is not exhaustive but includes those plants for which there is reliable information on the growth of roots and septic invasion.

TREES WITH ROOTS COMMONLY INVADING SEPTIC SYSTEMS

Boxelder (<i>Acer negundo</i>)	Peachleaf Willow (<i>Salix amygdaloides</i>)
Red Maple (<i>Acer rubrum</i>)	Corkscrew Willow (<i>Salix matsudana</i> "Tortuosa")
Silver Maple (<i>Acer saccharinum</i>)	Black Willow (<i>Salix nigra</i>)
Red Cedar (<i>Juniperus virginiana</i>)	American Elm (<i>Ulmus americana</i>)
Cottonwood (<i>Populus deltoids</i>)	Siberian Elm (<i>Ulmus pumila</i>)
Weeping Willow (<i>Salix alba</i> "Tristis")	Slippery Elm (<i>Ulmus rubra</i>)

TREES WITH ROOTS RARELY INVADING SEPTIC SYSTEMS

Norway Maple (<i>Acer platanoides</i>)	White Pine (<i>Pinus strobus</i>)
Sugar Maple (<i>Acer saccharum</i>)	White Oak (<i>Quercus alba</i>)
White Ash (<i>Fraxinus Americana</i>)	Bur Oak (<i>Quercus macrocarpa</i>)
Green Ash (<i>Fraxinus pennsylvanica</i>)	Red Oak (<i>Quercus rubra</i>)
Red Pine (<i>Pinus resinosa</i>)	

SHRUBS WITH ROOTS COMMONLY INVADING SEPTIC SYSTEMS

Gray Dogwood (<i>Cornus racemosa</i>)	Pussy Willow (<i>Salix discolor</i>)
Red-osier Dogwood (<i>Cornus stolonifera</i>)	Sandbar Willow (<i>Salix inertior</i>)
Common Buckthorn (<i>Rhamnus cathartica</i>)	



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