

Q&A Ask the experts

For all the guidance you need for all technical problems in your home

What to consider when installing a plastic septic tank

Q How is a plastic septic tank installed?
A Your builder must locate the tank away (at least three metres) from the driveway to prevent collapse because of the pressure from vehicles. In your planning, ensure the tanks can be accessed by a cesspool emptier, in case it gets full.

Q Why three metres from the main house?

A It is important to keep an adequate distance between the tank and the foundation of your house, because the foundation may be damaged during the digging of the tank. It is also important to remove the water that may have collected in the pit before installing the tank. When you are installing, ensure the compacted sand base is without any stones or sharp objects, because they can damage the tank. During excavation, create a hole about the size and shape of the tank. Take safety measures during excavation.

Q Can't the soil collapse?

A Your project engineer must pay particular attention to collapsing soil. You have to be careful as you lower the inlet and outlet pipes, and when putting the tank in the pit. You must use a rope to gently lower the tank.



Fill the tank with water before backfilling the dugout pit

Q Is cement important at this stage?

A During this time, ensure the dugout pit is backfilled with sandcrete (10% cement, 90% sand). Fill the tank with water before backfilling the dugout pit. Ensure the water is above the level of the backfill so as to stabilise the pressure in the tank. No water should seep back into the dugout pit before backfilling.

Q Maintenance?

A To ensure it lasts a long time, do not use excessive detergents,

disinfectants or bleach as they kill useful bacteria that decomposes waste. For rapid decomposition, use suitable detergents and follow manufacturers' user instructions.

Q Do location or sand type matter?

A In case of unstable soils such as running sand, fill the bottom with well-compacted hardcore before placing the sandcrete.

Responses by David Kireli, a civil engineer at the Ministry of Education and Sports

STOCK UP

Make sure you think of a butter dish, salt and pepper shakers

Be ready to entertain at home

Dining at home needn't be difficult. And with the difficulty in the economy today, many of us have had to cut back on treats—including eating out. But missing out on going out to dinner should be seen as an ideal opportunity to spend quality time in the completely relaxed atmosphere of your home surroundings. Or, maybe you need to entertain and are concerned about how to throw a successful

dinner party, especially if you are constrained by budget and do not know where to start. You can have just as a nice meal in as you can out, with a bit of planning. First, you will want to spruce the place up. Tidy any mess off the floor and make sure the table area is welcoming. You can do this well in advance.

This is one of those times where you can merrily pull out all your wedding china—or at least, your best china! If you have a table

cloth, use it. Make sure your wine glasses and cutlery are polished and shining. Put out any side plates, candles or other accessories before your guests arrive. Remember not to pile stuff high in the centre of the table, as this prevents easy conversation. Make sure you think of details such as a butter dish, salt and pepper shakers. This is so that you are not leaping up during the meal, because fine dining really is about the little details, as much as the food.



Keep your best stuff for the guests