

# Fact Sheet 9

## Indigenous plants and grasses for transpiration

There are around 6000 properties within the Shire of Nillumbik that are not connected to mains sewerage. These properties are serviced by an onsite wastewater disposal system (septic tank system). Wastewater if not properly managed can impact on public health and the environment.

There are 10 fact sheets about onsite wastewater systems:

1. Conventional septic tanks
2. Aerated wastewater treatment plants
3. Sand filters
4. Split system
5. Common disposal methods for primary treatment
6. Common disposal methods for secondary treatment
7. Purchasing a dwelling in Nillumbik
8. Greywater reuse
9. Indigenous plants and grasses for transpiration
10. Decommissioning your domestic wastewater system

This fact sheet contains a list of indigenous plants that are ideal for planting in and around, effluent disposal areas. They are shallow rooting; tolerate wet conditions and have a capacity for high evapo-transpiration.

### What is greywater?

Greywater (all non-toilet household wastewater) is domestic wastewater from a bath, shower, basin and laundry. Kitchen sinks are generally not considered an acceptable source of greywater due to the presence of food particles, grease, oils and fats. Greywater does not contain toilet waste but it can contain pathogens, which if poorly managed can present a risk to human health and the environment.

### Purple sheath tussock grass (*Poa ensiformis*)

**Flowering time:** October-March

**Flower colour:** green

**Preferred aspect:** full/semi-sun

- Vigorous tussock grass suited to moist shaded sites.
- Distinctive purple sheath around lower leaves.
- Responds well to pruning
- Provides habitat for insects, lizards and birds.

### Tall sedge (*Carex appressa*)

**Flowering time:** August-January

**Flower colour:** brownish-dull yellow

**Preferred aspect:** full sun

- Dense tussock of bright green, sharp edged leaves.

- Useful for erosion control on stream banks.
- Suitable for aquatic or bog gardens.
- Tolerates periods of waterlogging.
- Attracts butterflies.

### Tassel sedge (*Carex fascicularis*)

**Flowering time:** October-April

**Flower colour:** bright green

**Preferred aspect:** semi-sun

- Elegant and attractive tussock.
- Bright green with drooping flower heads.
- Requires moist soil and tolerates waterlogging.

### Common spike-rush (*Eleocharis acuta*)

**Flowering time:** spring to autumn

**Flower colour:** cream to brown

**Preferred aspect:** full sun, wet conditions

- Small to medium rush approximately 40cms high.
- Planted along water edges or banks to stabilise water.
- Provides habitat for water birds and other small birds.

### Sedges (*Juncus species*)

**Flowering time:** all year round

**Flower colour:** browns through to greens

**Preferred aspect:** full sun, semi shade, full shade

- Small to medium tussock rush with isolated stalks.
- Thin, flattened or round leaves or spears containing a spongy pith.
- Bears flowers and seed heads near the tip.

## For information

For information on onsite wastewater systems contact Environmental Health on 9433 3340.

### Club rush (*Isolepis species*)

**Flowering time:** all year round

**Flower colour:** browns through green and yellows

**Preferred aspect:** full sun or semi shade

- Small to medium tufted perennial sedge with erect or arching stems
- Suitable for moist areas
- Spreading from underground stems, seed dispersion and offshoots extending from flower head

### Planting tip

When planting out areas with absorption trenches, ensure plants are placed in between the trenches and not directly on top to avoid blockage from roots.

It is important to protect vegetation growing in between soil absorption trenches as these plants play a vital role in supporting the disposal of effluent through evapo-transpiration.

### Plant stockists

Many local nurseries have a good range of indigenous plants suitable for use with onsite septic systems including:

#### Edendale Indigenous Nursery

30 Gastons Road, Eltham 3095

Open daily 9.30am–4.30pm  
(except Christmas Day, Extreme and Code Red fire danger days)

Phone 9433 3711 or contact [edendale@nillumbik.vic.gov.au](mailto:edendale@nillumbik.vic.gov.au)

