



COOKING OIL

Restaurants, hospitals, food packagers and the majority of households all create vegetable and meat oil waste, causing significant issues for wastewater disposal. While the most common (and worst) way to get rid of cooking oils and greases is by pouring them down the drain, this can result in pump interference, sewerage overflows and clogged pipes. When pipes become clogged, the halted water flow causes sinks, toilets, and other areas to back up and block up.

Oils have very little water solubility and separate from water when cooled. Large amounts of oil and grease can congeal on tank surfaces and get in the way of effective treatment at wastewater treatment plants.

In order to promote healthy and effective wastewater disposal, as well as supporting recycling efforts and ensuring less waste is created, try to decrease the amount of oils you use, scrape and collect used oil in sealable

containers and do not pour down sinks or into waterways. Oils can be collected through various collection sources, recycled and made into a variety of products (but not for human consumption!). Examples of used cooking oil products are liquid and powder detergents and biodiesel fuel.

Biodiesel fuel can run in any unmodified diesel engine and is made from all new and used vegetable oils, including recycled cooking oils from fast food restaurants. It can directly replace conventional diesel fuel without any modification in most modern diesel engines. Globally, and especially in Europe, approximately 2 billion litres of biodiesel are consumed annually (Australian Renewable Fuels).

Reference: Australian Renewable Fuels, online at <http://www.ausrf.com.au/whatis.htm>

WHAT CAN I DO?

- Never pour oils down sinks or drains. Save oil, grease and meat fat for recycling in sealed containers.
- Small grease traps can be installed under sinks, and waste oils can be removed manually by scooping into watertight containers. Large grease traps, such as those used in businesses such as restaurants and food processing factories, can be emptied and collected for proper disposal. For waste grease disposal, see "Grease Traps" or "Septic" in the yellow pages.
- Environment Australia's Oil Directory lists waste oil drop off stations, collectors and recyclers around Australia at <http://www.ea.gov.au/industry/waste/oilrecycling/directory.html>. Waste contractors are also listed in the Yellow Pages.
- Small amounts of cooking oil can be placed in your compost bin.

MORE INFORMATION

- http://www.kentcountypdw.com/oil_and_grease_interceptor_and_t.htm - problems and solutions for dealing with used cooking oil
- <http://www.p2pays.org/food/main/oil.htm> - US site for the food industry on oil and grease considerations in the workplace
- <http://www.reading.gov.uk/consumerservices/wasteandrecycling/business/guides/oils.htm> - recycling cooking oils in the UK.
- <http://www.dancingrabbit.org/biodiesel/> - a community using waste vegetable oil as fuel.