

Rainwater Harvesting

Many people who are interested in conserving our precious groundwater resources consider harvesting rainwater for a variety of purposes around the house. Harvested rainwater should not be used for drinking. One good reason is that small wildlife -- such as squirrels -- may be able to get inside the tanks unless protective screens are installed...not to mention insects and other foreign matter. Because of these purity concerns, most people who collect rainwater use it for other purposes around the house instead.



If you are considering collecting rainwater here are some things to consider. Before you develop a collection system, be sure to decide what you're going to do with the water -- water garden spots, water inside plants, wash the dog -- then plan accordingly. Determine how you will get the water out of the storage container, and consider using a pump if it needs to exit with enough force to water the garden with more than a trickle.



The biggest problem with rainwater collection appears to be the cost of storage. The pricetag for storage tank, PVC pipe, and pump can reach \$500.

For more information, the Texas Water Development Board publication, "Texas Guide to Rainwater Harvesting, Second Edition," can be downloaded free from their website, <http://www.twdb.state.tx.us/assistance/conservation/rain.htm>. ■