



“Currents” July 2023

Why You Should Start Collecting Rainwater Today

These are our top six reasons why you should give rainwater harvesting a try, with the last reason being worth up to \$15,000!

On average Kerr County receives 30 inches of rain per year, but as the past couple of years have shown, rainfall within any given year varies greatly in frequency and intensity. Nearly every summer ends with trees, lawns, and waterways looking parched and shriveled. The feast or famine rainfall pattern of central Texas combined with increasing demand on water supplies has made water resource issues a top priority. Rainwater harvesting is an adaptable practice that allows individuals, businesses, or organizations to take a role in managing their water supplies.

Reason #1: Improve water quality. Living in a flash flood prone region means that most of our rainfall comes during intense storms and then quickly runs downstream. Diverting the rainfall from your roof into storage tanks prevents it from becoming stormwater runoff which can contaminate surface water with sediments, fertilizers, and pesticides. Stormwater runoff can also cause erosion and flooding as the water races over the land on its way to the nearest creek or river.

Reason #2: Plants prefer rainwater! Since rainwater is free of salts, minerals, and chlorine, your plants receive nearly pure water which improves plant and soil health.

Reason #3: Reduce strain on water resources. Residential landscapes traditionally use up to 50 percent of the household water budget. Reducing irrigated turf and installing native or drought tolerant plants that need less water is a great first step. Also, utilizing rainwater catchment systems for landscape watering needs is an excellent way to extend water supplies. Harvesting rainwater can really add up; during a 1” rainstorm, a 2,000 square foot roof can capture up to 1,250 gallons of water!

Reason #4: Emergency water supply. In the event of prolonged drought and power outages, stored rainwater can be accessed for household needs - even drinking if treated properly. Also, with the appropriate fitting, fire departments can draw from rainwater storage tanks to aid in fire suppression.

Reason #5: Adaptable to your needs. There are a variety of ways to implement rainwater harvesting and the systems can be designed to meet various needs and budgets. Collection sizes can range from a small scale 50-gallon barrel to a 30,000-gallon tank that with proper installation can serve all your indoor and outdoor uses.

Reason #6: UGRA has two programs to encourage rainwater harvesting. Schools, nonprofit organizations, and public entities could receive up to \$15,000 towards the installation of a new or expanded system through the Rainwater System Grant Program. Applications are accepted year-round and reviewed once a quarter. Also, UGRA’s Rainwater Catchment Rebate Program offers up to a \$500 rebate for rainwater catchment systems installed at Kerr County addresses. Each Kerr County address is eligible for the rebate once per calendar year. Visit www.ugra.org/major-initiatives/rainwater-harvesting for additional details about both programs.

Give rainwater harvesting a try!

Let’s Keep Our River Clean

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