

## Harvesting Rainwater for Your Home Garden

If your home garden is looking a little parched, then a rainwater storage tank is the perfect solution to make sure you always have enough water for your plants. This article will look at using storage tanks for harvesting rainwater to be used in your garden. No complicated plumbing is necessary—water flows from your gutter to the tank, from which you can simply attach a garden hose. No mess, no fuss.

### Rainwater is Better for Your Plants

Rainwater is soft and natural meaning it doesn't contain chemicals such as chlorine, sodium, fluoride or other particles found in your city water supply. This is especially important if your garden contains sensitive plants.

Fruit-bearing plants such as strawberries, blackberries, or blueberries, or vegetables such as cucumbers, onions, and lettuce can be sensitive to chlorine. Higher chlorine concentrations reduce plant growth and health, affecting the appearance of ornamental plants and even the taste of vegetables and fruits. Fluoride can injure plant leaves while large amounts of sodium in the soil prevents roots from absorbing water.

Rainwater, on the other hand, is free of these chemicals, not only because it isn't treated but because it hasn't had time to absorb chemicals existing in the soil. It also has the slightly acidic pH that plants naturally prefer. Mains water is more alkaline, which can be too harsh for some plants. Rainwater also contains traces of organic material, which plants love, and plenty of nitrates, which plants need to make amino acids.

### Rainwater is Better for the Environment

Using rain water in your garden means you're not extracting mains water from dams and river systems. Water that goes through the process to become potable can leave quite a significant carbon footprint. Drawing water from lakes and rivers affects the ecosystem, impacting plant and animal life while causing erosion to the surrounding soil. Once water is drawn, it requires a large amount of energy to move and treat. With a growing concern over climate change and environmental issues, using rainwater is one of the few ways you can do your part to ensure a sustainable water resources for your children.

### Rainwater Harvesting is Easy

Because rainwater doesn't—and shouldn't—require any treatment for water your plants, you do not need complicated plumbing. Runoff can be collected from your roof, and with

screening such as gutter screens, rain heads or water diverters, the rainwater harvested in your storage tank can be of a very high quality.

Some people may improvise with something less, such as barrels, but during a downpour these will quickly become full and you don't want them overflowing and drowning your gardens. A properly designed rainwater storage tank will pipe away overflow so you don't end up flooding your garden. You won't have to worry, even if you're not at home—properly installed water tank will gather only the amount of water they can store and then flush the rest to the storm system.

Rainwater tanks can be fitted with a tap and directly attached to your garden hose, making water available whenever you need it.

### **How Much Water is Needed?**

You can calculate the amount of water your plants roughly need by calculating your garden area. Twenty-four litres per square metre every 7-10 days is a good rule of thumb for plant growth. Once you have an idea how much water your garden requires, you can decide on your storage needs. A 10m x 5m garden area, for example, will need approximately 1,200 litres of water every week. You can decide how much water to store by considering how often it rains in your area. You may need more than a weekly storage if you live in a drier climate where it barely rains.

It is important that your rainwater storage is kept dark and covered. This ensures that organisms like algae don't bloom inside. Adequate screening, a requirement throughout Australia, also prevents your rainwater storage from becoming a breeding ground for mosquitoes and other insects.

If you are interested in harvesting rainwater for your garden, check out Clark Tanks' [range of rainwater tanks](#). You can select from a range of colours, styles and sizes to meet your needs and complement your garden décor.

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