

## PRESS RELEASE

### **Now is the Time to Save Money and Invest in Rainwater Harvesting**

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During this unexpected time of quarantine and self-isolation, there has been some definite adjustments in our day-to-day lifestyle. You may find yourself looking for some ways to pass the time, improve your lawn and garden, and get out of the house while still maintaining healthy practices. This time of the year is the perfect time to install a rainwater harvesting system, which is a recommended water-conserving measure by the Texas Water Development Board.

#### **What is rainwater harvesting?**

Rainwater harvesting is an innovative alternative water supply approach anyone can use. Rainwater harvesting captures, diverts, and stores rainwater for later use. Implementing rainwater harvesting is beneficial because it reduces demand on existing water supply, and reduces run-off, erosion, and contamination of surface water. Rainwater can be used for nearly any purpose that requires water. However, it is important to check any city or county ordinances regarding the use of harvested rainwater. These include landscape use, stormwater control, wildlife and livestock watering, in-home use, and fire protection. A rainwater harvesting system can range in size and complexity. All systems have basic components, which include a catchment surface, conveyance system, storage, distribution, and treatment.



#### **Why harvest rainwater?**

Rainwater harvesting systems are being installed by gardening enthusiasts, business owners, and homeowners with the intent of making their home more eco-friendly. Rainwater harvesting is recognized as an important water conservation practice and is best implemented in conjunction with other efficient water-conserving measures in and outside of the home, according to the Texas Water Development Board.

Rainwater is of superior quality: zero hardness, sodium free, and nearly neutral pH. Harvesting rainwater can reduce demand on traditional water supplies and can provide water in areas without access to a conventional water supply system. The zero hardness of rainwater helps scales from building up on appliances and so extends the life of appliances. Rainwater is superior for landscape use and plants thrive on rainwater. Rainwater harvesting also reduces flow to storm sewers and lowers the threat of flooding. Additionally, rainwater harvesting helps utilities reduce

peak demands during summer months. By harvesting rainwater, homeowners can reduce their utility bills.

### **How much rainwater can I harvest?**

As a general rule of thumb, for every inch of rain that falls on a 2,000-square-foot roof, about 1,000 gallons of water can be collected. The average rainfall across the four counties within Prairielands GCD is approximately 37 inches, so about 37,000 gallons of water could be collected in this area annually on a 2,000-square-foot roof.

### **Incentives and Statewide Support**

The Texas Legislature allows the exemption of part or all of the assessed value of the property on which approved water conservation initiatives, such as rainwater harvesting, are made. Individuals planning to install rainwater harvesting systems should check with their respective county appraisal districts for guidance on exemption from county property taxes. In addition, the Texas Tax Code exempts rainwater harvesting equipment and supplies from state sales tax. To claim this exemption, present a Texas Sales and Use Tax Exemption Certificate to the supplier of the equipment at the time of purchase. Some municipalities, local water providers, and counties also offer rebates and financial incentives to promote rainwater harvesting as part of their water conservation initiatives.

Texas has several laws supporting rainwater harvesting. Texas Property Code prevents a homeowner's association from prohibiting the use of rainwater harvesting systems (Texas Property Code §202.007). The state also requires certain new state facilities to incorporate rainwater harvesting systems in their design. Municipalities and counties are also encouraged to promote rainwater harvesting at residential, commercial, industrial, and educational facilities through incentives such as discounts for rain barrels or rebates for water storage facilities.

The Prairielands Groundwater Conservation District, which was created by the 81<sup>st</sup> Texas Legislature to conserve, protect and enhance groundwater resources in Johnson, Hill, Ellis and Somervell Counties, recommends rainwater harvesting as a way to conserve water resources. To find out more about rainwater harvesting, as well as other water conservation practices you and your family can implement in and outside your home, please visit [www.prairielandsgcd.org](http://www.prairielandsgcd.org). Another great resource is to visit [www.morningchores.com/rainwater-harvesting/](http://www.morningchores.com/rainwater-harvesting/) for a guide to 23 DIY rainwater harvesting ideas you can do around your home.

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