



## Why Harvest Rain?

Rainwater harvesting is becoming popular once again for three reasons: its superior water quality, a desire to reduce the use and dependence on a well drilled into the Trinity aquifer's declining groundwater table, and avoiding the cost of securing municipally treated water for all of our daily uses. Rainwater has long been valued for its purity and softness. It is free from salts, minerals, and other natural and man-made contaminants. In addition, rainwater harvesting is valued as a water conservation tool since it allows you to use the 30 or so inches of Comal County rainwater instead of a well or municipally treated water. This, in turn, reduces the amount of water a water purveyor has to treat and deliver to their service area.

Rainwater is essentially FREE; once the capital cost of the collection system infrastructure is paid for, you will harvest free water. This infrastructure cost is on a par with drilling a well deep enough into the Trinity aquifer to secure a drought-resistant supply of water. It always rains—even in droughts so local residents with rainwater catchment systems rarely run low on fresh water. Two of our GCD Directors harvest rain for their potable and landscaping water needs.

Capturing rain is socially acceptable and environmentally responsible since it promotes self-sufficiency and helps conserve water. If you draw from water distributors, it reduces municipal water consumption and thus a monthly water bill. Rainwater can also be used as a home's primary source of water or as a back-up source to wells and municipal water. It can also be helpful in times of emergencies, and it provides one with total control over their water supply during times of water restrictions. Rainwater harvesting systems can be easily retrofitted to an existing structure or built during new home construction. They are very flexible and modular, allowing expansion, reconfiguration, or relocation.

Rainwater is the best water source for landscape irrigation due to the lack of chlorine and other treatment chemicals. Rainwater harvesting can reduce the frequency and intensity of erosion around our house or property. Rainwater harvesting also reduces stormwater pollution, thereby lessening the tainting impact on our local watersheds.

We, at the Trinity Groundwater Conservation District, believe one of the biggest benefits of harvesting rainwater to replace the use of water from a municipal water supply or water well, is the ability to examine our relationship with water. In industrialized nations, we take our water supply for granted. We can turn on a faucet and relatively clean water comes out. We turn off the faucet and then walk away, not thinking about all of the steps and processes it took to get that clean, potable water to your faucet.

Harvesting and using rainwater helps us understand the sheer quantity of water that we use daily for specific purposes. If we are using the harvested rainwater for irrigation purposes, we will start to realize just how much water landscaping requires, rather than just relying on an automatic sprinkler system that comes on a few times a week to water our landscaping. From this knowledge, we can start the discussion of potentially converting our landscaping to more native plants or potentially changing some of our landscaping areas to more xeriscape areas.