



Rainwater Harvesting

Traditionally, rainwater harvesting has been practised in arid and semi-arid areas, and has provided drinking water, domestic water, water for livestock, water for small irrigation and a way to replenish ground water levels. Before large centralized water supply systems were developed, rainwater was collected from roofs and stored on site in tanks known as cisterns. With the development of large, reliable water treatment and distribution systems and more affordable well drilling equipment, rain harvesting systems have been all but forgotten, even though they offer a source of pure, soft, low sodium water.

Rainwater harvesting in urban areas can be used in many ways: To provide supplemental water for the city's requirement, to increase soil moisture levels for urban greenery, to increase the ground water table through artificial recharge, to mitigate urban flooding and to improve the quality of groundwater. These are just a few of the reasons why rainwater harvesting can be adopted in cities. In urban areas of the developed world, at a household level, harvested rainwater can be used for flushing toilets and washing laundry.

A renewed interest in this time-honored approach has emerged in Texas and elsewhere due to:

- the escalating environmental and economic costs of providing water by centralized water systems or by well drilling;
- health benefits of rainwater; and
- potential cost savings associated with rainwater collection systems.

There are many types of systems to harvest rainwater. The type used depends on physical and human considerations. For more information or guidance please contact the Lone Star Groundwater Conservation District office at 936/494.3436.



Montgomery County Extension Agent Tom Leroy at one of many Lone Star GCD sponsored harvesting sites.