



INSTALLING A RAINWATER TANK

In an average year around 40,000 litres of water could be collected and used from the roof area of a home in the Perth and Peel Region. This could provide around two-thirds of the water used in the typical home for flushing toilets and doing laundry.

However in many homes this water runs into drains or soak wells. By collecting rainwater to provide part of your household's water needs you can:

- Reduce your water bill;
- Reduce the energy used in pumping water to your house, lowering greenhouse gas emissions; and
- Help in conserving Western Australia's scarce drinking water reserves.

WHAT CAN I DO?

Install a rainwater tank to collect rainwater to be used for non-potable (non-drinking) purposes.

HOW DO I DO IT?

There are a number of questions you need to ask yourself prior to purchasing your water tank. Some of the most important questions include:

1. What am I going to use the water for?

You will need to decide how you want to use your tank water. You have two options:

- Use some of the water on the garden and to wash your car (the simplest



JOSH BYRNE

Sustainable gardening specialist and popular media personality gives advice on installing a rainwater tank.

Install a 3,500 litre water tank and save each year.



Government of **Western Australia**
Department for **Planning and Infrastructure**



option). If you decide on this option you could install a smaller tank e.g. minimum of 600 litres with a tap but no pump.

- Use the water inside the house for flushing the toilet and doing your laundry. This requires the installation of plumbing to connect the tank to your household water supply and will require a registered plumber to undertake the work. If you decide on this option you should install a larger tank e.g. approximately 3,500 litres.

Note:

This fact sheet does not address the use of rainwater tanks to collect drinking water.

2. What size tank should I buy?

Our Mediterranean climate can result in a small tank overflowing in winter and quickly emptying in summer as water use in the garden increases. A large tank, plumbed in to supply home uses will conserve the most water. The ideal tank sizes for a WA home are:

- 5,000 litres for non-potable (non drinking) domestic purposes (e.g. toilet flushing, washing clothes, some garden watering and car washing) and holding stormwater.

- 3,500 litres for flushing the toilet and doing laundry.

However, your individual needs will influence your final decision.

3. How much space will I need to install the tank?

You need to determine whether you have enough room to install a rainwater tank on your property. As a guide:

- A 2,000 litre round tank will be about 1.2 metres in diameter and 2 metres high.
- A 5,000 litre round tank will be about 1.8 metres in diameter and 2 metres high.

If space is limited there are a large number of options available including installing your tank underground or purchasing a slimline tank, which will sit against the side of your house.

4. Is my roof catchment area suitable?

Over a year approximately 40,000 litres of water could be collected and used from a 100m² roof area. A 5,000 litre tank would be ideal for this situation.



5. How much will the water tank cost?

Water tanks come in a massive range of colours, sizes, shapes and materials. For quotes contact your local water tank supplier by looking under 'Tanks and Tank Equipment' in the Yellow Pages.

Costs may include:

- Delivery and installation;
- Hiring a licensed plumber to connect the water indoors (if required);
- Roof, guttering and down pipe adjustments (if necessary);
- A foundation or tank stand for above ground tanks or excavation work for below ground tanks;
- Buying first flush devices, insect screens and gutter guards;
- Water pumps and mains water back up device.

As a guide a 3,500 litre tank complete with pump and all the necessary hardware, installed and plumbed into your home would cost approximately \$3,500 to \$4,000.

6. Will I need building approval from my local government authority?

Before purchasing and installing a rainwater tank check with your local government for local building regulations that apply in your area.

REBATES FOR RAINWATER TANKS

A federal rebate of up to \$500* is available for the purchase and installation of new rainwater tanks for domestic use as part of the National Rainwater and Greywater Initiative. Tanks with a capacity between 2,000 and 3,999 litres get \$400 and tanks with a capacity greater than 4,000 litres get \$500. Capacity can be reached with more than one tank and it must be plumbed in by a licensed plumber for use in your toilet and/or washing machine when installed. One rebate per household for either the rainwater tank or greywater system and it can be claimed on investment properties as long as it is a principal place of residence (i.e. tenanted as a residence, not a holiday home or similar).

(*National Rainwater and Greywater Initiative rebate are current at June 2009. They are subject to change. Go to www.environment.gov.au/water for more information.)



ADDITIONAL CONTACT INFORMATION

For information on tank suppliers look under 'Tanks and Tank Equipment' in the Yellow Pages www.yellowpages.com.au

If you have any queries regarding rebates for water tanks contact the Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts on 1800 808 571 or by visiting www.environment.gov.au/water

If you are considering using the rainwater for drinking purposes (not addressed in this fact sheet) please contact the Department of Health on 9222 4222 for guidelines on using rainwater tanks and a copy of its publication Urban Rainwater Collection before you have a tank installed www.health.wa.gov.au/home

When looking for a plumber go to www.watercorporation.com.au under "Being Waterwise" > "Waterwise specialist" for a list of Waterwise plumbers.

WHY?

The typical household uses about 770 L of scheme water per day or about 300 L per person per day. These volumes are steadily decreasing with the application of water conservation measures. By collecting rainwater and using it in your garden or for non-potable purposes within your home you can reduce your water consumption and save money on your water bill.