Maximising Water Captured by Storage Tanks During Rainfall and Storms

Hotter Australian temperatures mixed with ever increasing populations places greater demand on our mains water supply. This in turn creates pressure for water authorities to identify and tap into alternative water sources, often resulting in higher expense to consumers.

Rainwater tanks obviously allow you to harvest water *freely* from the sky. This makes them an appealing source of water for both home owners and in the farming industry. In addition, plumbing in rainwater tanks helps to meet government environmental efficiency ratings.

Given the important of collecting rainwater today in Australia, this article takes a look at ways you can maximise the amount of rainwater captured from your property to be stored in water tanks.

Collecting Rainwater Runoff in Stormwater Tanks

Out of all the water source options available, a popular option people naturally consider is collecting rainwater from their roofs into tanks. An often overlooked water source is rainwater that falls upon the ground and flows over the surface of your property.

Stormwater is any water that flows over ground surfaces. It generally picks up more particles, sediment, chemicals and the like which make it unsafe for drinking and cooking purposes. Nonetheless, it can still be used in your garden, washing your car, possibly topping up your pool water, toilet flushing and the like.

When installing a rainwater tank, some councils may require you to set aside storage capacity to detain rainwater. This helps assist with any storm water runoff issues that could otherwise occur in your area. Dedicating a separate stormwater tank for this purpose often provides an effective solution.

Stormwater tanks are normally placed underground where water can more easily flow into them. This makes underground tanks the ideal solution for stormwater storage. If you are keen to make the most of collecting water from your property, then consider installing an underground tank to harvest stormwater. Some, such as National Poly's underground poly tanks, can be installed under a driveway and only require shallow excavation.

More Efficient Rainwater Harvesting from Roofs

The more popular way of collecting rainwater is to position a water tank beside your house. Rainwater then falls onto and down your roof, flows into your gutters and down pipes leading into your rainwater tank. This water is normally much higher quality than stormwater collected from the grounds surface.

- **Proper maintenance** of your rainwater harvesting area, connecting pipes and rainwater tank can increase the quantity and quality of your rainwater. For example, ensure your gutters and pipes are unblocked and do not contain leaves and debris so rainwater can freely flow into your tank.

- **Pipes and gutters** should be routinely checked every three months to ensure they remain unblocked. Water tank accessories like rain heads (leaf eaters), strainers and gutter screens can also help to prevent debris build up and increase the quality of your water.
- **Downpipe water diverters** are recommended where possible. Installing a downpipe water diverter improves your rainwater quality because it stops the first flush of dirty rainwater flowing down your roof and entering your tank. The first litres of rainwater often contain leafs, debris and dead insects.

  Furthermore, sometimes the dirty water that collects in a water diverter is setup to slowly drip into a drain. Rather than loose this water you could install a drip feed system for your garden, or simply collect it in a container which you can use later.
- **Consume your rainwater**. Do not be shy and think you have to conserve it. If your rainwater tank is full, then any additional rainwater will simply overflow down into your stormwater drainage. People with rainwater tanks understandably feel a need to conserve water, however studies show those who use their rainwater will collect rainwater more effectively.
- **Automatic rainwater to mains water switched**. If worried about your rainwater running dry, then consider installing an automatic rainwater to mains water switching system. Automatic switches provide more efficient water usage and some can provide water savings of up to 40%.

National Poly Industries *is a privately owned Australian company manufacturing tanks for over 20 years and polyethylene tanks for over 15 years. We are well-established company and known as a pioneering poly tank manufacturer dedicated to being the absolute leader in the polyethylene rainwater tank market and associated product groups.*

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