

Every Drop Counts— Collect and Use Your Rainwater



The population of Texas is expected to more than double between the years 2000 and 2060, growing from almost 21 million to about 46 million. However, the state's water supply is projected to decrease during this same time period, from 17.8 million acre-feet in 2010 to 14.6 million acre-feet in 2060. Faced with a growing population and a diminishing water supply, Texans will need to both conserve existing resources and consider

using alternative technologies, such as rainwater harvesting.

Rainwater harvesting, the collecting and storing of rainwater, is one way Texans can do their part to conserve water. By simply collecting rainwater for outdoor use during the peak summer months, you can save up to 1,300 gallons of water. In fact, by collecting rainwater from 10 percent of the residential roof area in Texas (estimated at 15.7 billion square feet), approximately 27 billion gallons of water could be conserved annually.

Rainwater harvesting has many benefits:

- The water is free.
- Rainwater is better for plants than chemically treated water.
- Rainwater harvesting reduces flow to stormwater drains and can help reduce stream pollution.
- Using stored rainwater can reduce utility bills.

Rainwater harvesting systems can be as simple as placing a barrel underneath a gutter downspout to collect water for use on your lawn, plants, and landscape. To use rainwater for indoor purposes, a more complex system that includes stringent filtration would be needed.

The Home Depot and the TCEQ will sponsor Earth Day consumer-education events about rainwater harvesting on Saturday, April 18; look for details as they become available on the agency's Web site at <www.tceq.state.tx.us>. To learn more about rainwater harvesting, visit <www.tceq.state.tx.us/permitting/water_supply/rainwater/>.

TCEQ's Environmental Trade Fair and Conference: May 12-14

Plan to attend the TCEQ's Environmental Trade Fair and Conference, being held at the Austin Convention Center on May 12-14. This annual event is Texas' premier environmental educational forum, considered by many to be one of the best in the country.

Features for this year's conference include:

- Twelve concurrent educational tracks with over 100 in-depth sessions on the state's environmental rules, regulations, and issues.
- More than 400 exhibits showcasing leading environmental alternatives for business and industry.
- Up to 12 hours of continuing education credits for geoscientists, engineers, attorneys, and other professionals.
- Opportunities for networking and meeting one-on-one with TCEQ staff.

For more information and how to register, visit <www.tceq.state.tx.us/assistance/events/etfc/etf.html>.

The Texas Environmental Excellence Awards, presented at a banquet celebrating the state's most outstanding waste reduction and pollution prevention projects, are a highlight of the conference. The awards are given in 11 diverse categories across public and private sectors: Agriculture, Civic/Nonprofit, Education, Government, Individual, Innovative Technology, Large Business/Nontechnical, Large Business/Technical, Small Business, Youth, and Water Conservation—a new category this year.

Hosted by Governor Rick Perry and the TCEQ Commissioners, this event will be held on May 13. For more information, visit <www.teea.org>.

WaterSense Makes It Easy to Save

WaterSense, a partnership program sponsored by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), strives to help consumers save water and money by identifying water-efficient products and programs. The WaterSense label indicates that a product or program



meets water efficiency and performance criteria. WaterSense products and programs include bathroom faucets, showerheads, and landscape-irrigation services.

According to the EPA, a WaterSense product saves about 20 percent more water than its less-efficient counterpart in the same category. Products that bear the WaterSense label meet all the criteria in EPA's specifications for water efficiency and performance.

For more information on the WaterSense program, or to find a WaterSense product, visit <www.epa.gov/watersense>.

Interested in Learning More About Water Conservation for Your Home?

Save the date of Saturday, April 18, for an Earth Day consumer-education event about rainwater harvesting with The Home Depot and the TCEQ!

Looking for New Ways to Green Your Community?

Attend the Sustainable Communities Conference on March 9–11 in Dallas to learn new ways to help you build a more sustainable municipality. This conference is presented by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Sustainable Skylines Initiative, in partnership with the City of Dallas, the North Central Texas Council of Governments, and private sector organizations. It strives to connect municipal governments, local organizations, and related public entities with cost-effective, environmentally sustainable solutions and partnerships.

For more information, visit < www.cleanairinfo.com/sustainableskylines/index.htm>.

Highlighted TCEQ Publications

Landscape Irrigation: A Consumer's Guide to Landscape Irrigation in Texas, GI-390, is a general-information pamphlet on landscape irrigation for homeowners, offered in both English and Spanish.



Landscape Irrigation Program: Implementation, RG-466, explains new rules relating to landscape irrigation for both licensed professionals and customers.

The TCEQ Border Initiative, GI-392, offers general information on the TCEQ's comprehensive, cooperative effort to serve border residents.

Spray Coating and Abrasive Blast Cleaning poster, GI-393, alerts spray-coating applicators and abrasive blasters that they must comply with State of Texas rules before conducting these types of activities.

Priority Groundwater Management Areas and Groundwater Conservation Districts, Report to the 81st Legislature, SFR-053/06, provides information on activities undertaken during the preceding two years relating to the study and designation of priority groundwater management areas and the creation and operation of groundwater conservation districts.

To order TCEQ publications, visit <www.tceq.state.tx.us/publications>.

Take Care of Texas Tips

At Home

Avoid Over-Watering Your Lawn



Watering too heavily or too often weakens your lawn and causes erosion and runoff pollution. When needed, water one inch, once a week. To measure, place an empty 6-ounce tuna can on your lawn and stop watering when it is full. Watering in the morning will save water from being evaporated by the midday heat. That will save you money on your water bill, too!

Around the Office

Check for Leaks

Fix any leaks you find in office faucets and toilets. A faucet leaking one drop per second can waste up to 1,661 gallons of water each year. Toilets account for most of the water lost to leaks, and 25 percent of all toilets leak. Use a leak-detection dye tablet to check toilets; otherwise, you could waste about 200 gallons of water per toilet every day.



www.takecareoftexas.org

We Are Going Paperless!

We will discontinue mailing hard copies of this newsletter on May 1, 2009. If you currently receive a hard copy, please provide us with an e-mail address to receive notifications of new issues available online. There are two ways you may request to receive these notifications via e-mail:

1. **Go to <www.tceq.state.tx.us/assistance/education/info/enviro_news.html> and follow the instructions to sign up.**
2. **E-mail us at <educate@tceq.state.tx.us>.**

Any subscriber who has not contacted us with a valid e-mail address by May 1, 2009, will no longer receive Take Care of Texas News You Can Use. You can always sign up at a later date if you wish. If you already receive the newsletter notifications via e-mail, you do not need to contact us at this time.

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