

Maintaining Your Rainwater Harvesting System



Photos courtesy of Catching H2O

Rain tank maintenance

Follow these simple maintenance steps to ensure your rainwater harvesting tank remains in good condition and provides you with a reliable source of high-quality water for your plants.

Prior to the rainy season (August):

- Check inlet and overflow screens to ensure they are intact and well-sealed.
- Clean debris off the inlet screen and remove any algae on the inside of the overflow screen.
- Clean debris from gutters.
- Check the overflow pipe to make sure it's in good condition and routing water away from buildings and neighboring properties.

During the rainy season (October-April):

- Empty first flush diverter and clean off leaf filters after each storm.
- Clean out top filter basket (if you have one) and the overflow screen as needed.
- After each storm, use the water in your rain tank to water your garden or slowly release the water into your landscape. This helps to create space in the tank to collect more rainwater during the next storm. If you plan to save rainwater for use during the summer, consider limiting the release of water towards the end of the rainy season (February and March) so that your tank remains full heading into the summer months.

During the dry season (May-September)

- Use the water in your cistern!
- Regularly check that mosquito screens are intact and that the tank lid is secure.



Example of a typical leaf filter. Note common debris that can accumulate from a roof including leaves, dead insects, and roofing particles. Debris should be cleaned off prior to rain.

City of San Diego Rebates

The City of San Diego offers rebates for the following:

- Rain barrels/cisterns
- Downspout redirects
- Rain gutters
- Residential turfgrass replacement

For more information on water conservation, pollution prevention, and to check eligibility, please visit WasteNoWater.org or ThinkBlue.org

Additional Rebates

Additional indoor and outdoor water conservation rebates, including rebates for rain barrels and cisterns, are offered by Metropolitan Water District of Southern California. Visit socialwatersmart.com for more information.



References and More Information

- Think Blue San Diego: ThinkBlue.org
- City of San Diego Water Conservation Program: WasteNoWater.org
- American Rainwater Catchment Systems Association: www.arcса.org
- San Diego Sustainable Landscape Guidelines: https://www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/sdc/dpw/watersheds/residential/San_Diego_Sustainable_Landscape_Guidelines.html
- Be Water Wise: <https://www.bewaterwise.com/toolkit.html>
- The Water Conservation Garden: <https://thegarden.org/>
- *Rainwater Harvesting for Drylands and Beyond Volume 1 and 2* by Brad Lancaster (available from City of San Diego Public Library system)
- *The Water-Wise Home: How to Conserve, Capture, and Reuse Water in Your Home and Landscape* by Laura Allen (available from City of San Diego Public Library system)

For more information on City of San Diego's pollution prevention and water conservation efforts, including rebates, please visit ThinkBlue.org or WasteNoWater.org

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