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Storing and conserving water in your garden

How to make the most of every drop of rain that falls on your garden.



RAINWATER

You can collect rainwater in WATER BUTTS, you can collect rainwater from the roof of your house, as well as your garage, greenhouse or shed.

You will need a water butt attached to a gutter with a down pipe and a filter to prevent leaves and debris from getting into the water butt. Place your water butt on a flat firm surface such bricks, leaving enough space to put your watering can beneath the flow tap. You can also join several water butts together with connecter kits or syphons. Make sure your water butt has a close-fitting lid to stop plant spores entering the water and algae forming. You need to clean your water butt annually with warm water and a little washing up liquid – rinsing thoroughly.



Storing water in a TROUGH, usually connected to a downspout from a roof. Disadvantage of this is that they can overfill – unless you use it for rainwater from your shed or greenhouse where there would be less to collect. The water from a trough is OK for well-established plants and trees but not young plants and seedlings. It is useful to know that adding aerating plants to the trough will assist with water stagnation.

Whichever way you store water keep your gutters clear and use the stored water frequently to keep it fresh. If the water starts to smell, empty the container and clean it to start afresh, do not use the water on your plants.



GREY WATER.

Grey water is from showers, baths and kitchen sinks. Recycling household water for use as grey water during water shortages is very useful. However, do not use this kind of water on edible plants that are not being cooked such as lettuce, radish etc. Use grey water immediately – do not store it. Do not use grey water that contains bleach, disinfectant, dishwater salt or harsh cleaners. Use a watering can, to water your plants. Try to alternate between grey water and your collected rainwater during drought conditions. Ideas from www.rhs.org.uk