

# Harvest the Monsoon Rain!

Arizona isn't always a sunny place. In fact, this time of year the weather here can be wet and wild! Monsoon season begins mid-June and usually runs through this month. This is a very important time of year because it provides much-needed rainfall—and here's how you can put it to good use!

## Rainwater Harvesting

Did you know that outdoor water use can more than triple in the summer? With the monsoon season upon us, here's how you and your family can collect and direct rainwater to keep your plants green and save money.

The monsoon can bring us more than half of our annual rainfall! But oftentimes the rain comes down so fast and furiously that it runs off too quickly to do the most good.

Through rainwater harvesting, you can collect this free water or slow the flow and redirect it to where it's needed!

With so much surface area, roofs can help collect the rain. A system of gutters and down-spouts along the edges of your roof can consolidate much of the roof runoff and can direct it into planter beds, tree wells or even into large storage tanks called cisterns.

Cisterns have a connection on the bottom so you can hook up a garden hose or even a drip irrigation system to use the harvested water whenever you need it!

One of the most important ideas with water harvesting is to keep the rain in your yard instead of having it rush down the driveway, out into the street and into a nearby arroyo or riverbed.

If the rainwater stays in the yard, your plants have a chance to get a good soaking and to thrive. And since this water is free, rainwater harvesting helps to lower your family's water bills.

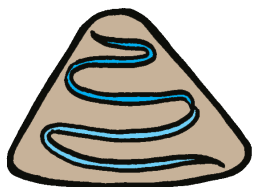
A smart landscape design can have a series of basins and terraces to make the most out of the rain that falls in your yard. Gently sloping terraces can empty into plant beds. Some people even create a series of swales—broad, shallow trenches—to slow runoff so it can soak in.

Did you know that having plants strategically placed around your home can help lower your electricity bills? Plants that are growing and thriving can provide shade for your home (especially from the hot afternoon sun). This helps to keep your house cooler so you don't waste as much money on air conditioning!



## More Ways to Learn About Water

### How Do Swales Work?



With a small shovel, make a mound of dirt at least 2 feet tall. With a watering can, pour water fast enough so it starts running straight down the mound. Watch how fast it flows. Starting from the top, dig a small, zig-zagging trench the face of the mound, with h section gently sloping down. our water so it starts flowing. Does the water flow slower or faster down the mound? Does more or less water soak in when you have swales?