

RainScapes



RainScapes are the ultimate in water efficient landscaping. In a RainScape, all outdoor plant water needs are met by [harvesting rainwater](#) (and [gray water](#) if possible) while preserving tap water for indoor and drinking water needs.

RainScapes follow the 7 principles of [Xeriscaping](#) for a water efficient landscape, but add an 8th principle, “Balancing the Budget”, to ensure all the water needs for the landscape are met by the rain that falls on the property.

RainScapes balance the landscape water budget by using a combination of different kinds and amounts of plants, and rain catchment options including storage tanks (“active systems”) and contouring the land (“passive systems”) to beneficially

direct rainwater. How much water you need each month for irrigation depends on the number and type of plants in the landscape. The more water thrifty the plants, the less water needs to be captured -- or you can add more plants to take advantage of the abundance of rain on your property.

Think there isn't enough rain? With an annual rainfall of 15", a ¼ acre lot receives over 100,000 gallons of rainwater per year. What falls on the ground can be directed to plants-- contouring the soil can help direct and detain the water long enough to help give the plants a good drink.

Want to collect it for use during dry months? Six hundred gallons of water can be collected for every 1" of rainfall that lands on a 1,000 square foot roof. Just like a checking account where you make deposits and withdrawals throughout the year, a storage tank works much the same way. Therefore, although you may get 9,000 gallons of rain from your 1,000 square foot roof in a year, it is not necessary to store a years' worth of water.



If rainwater is actively stored for later use, a “balanced water budget” will assure that plants needing extra water during the drier months will have the water they need to thrive. If no storage tanks are used, select plants that can survive on rainfall with passive collection techniques.

Water Wise has various tools available to help “Balance the Budget”:

- Plant lists are available to help you select low water use plants.
 - [Cochise County Plant List](#)
 - [Sierra Vista Plant List](#) with [introduction](#)
 - No Supplemental Plant List- [contact Water Wise](#)
- [Watering Guidelines](#) help with watering frequencies of low and high water use plants
- Water Budget worksheets help estimate storage tank size based on amounts and kinds of landscape plants. The worksheets also help to plan a RainScape by estimating plant water needs. [Contact Water Wise](#) for more information on these worksheets.



RainScapes help reduce dependence on declining water supplies while giving you a beautiful landscape supplied by Mother Nature's bounty. Because water use in landscaping accounts for up to 50% of a typical water bill, this is a great way to help your community -- and your wallet!