



PROTECTING AND ENHANCING THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT THROUGH COMPREHENSIVE ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAMS

RAINWATER HARVESTING

Rainwater harvesting is the practice of collecting and storing rainwater in large, durable containers, usually from rooftop gutters. Rainwater harvesting systems come in a variety of shapes and sizes. Rainwater harvesting systems typically use a storage container such as a cistern, rain tank, or rain barrel for capturing rainfall for future use. Rainwater harvesting captures the first flush of stormwater, which contains the highest concentrations of pollutants. Indoor use of captured stormwater is typically limited to non-potable water supply such as toilet flushing, cleaning, and laundry washing. The most common outdoor use for rainwater harvesting is for irrigation.

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT TO MAINTAIN YOUR RAIN BARREL OR CISTERN

An unmaintained rain barrel or cistern may:

- Allow rainwater from rooftop downspouts to drain onto driveways, sidewalks, or other paved (impervious) surfaces and not soak into the ground.
- Clog or leak.

Who is responsible for this maintenance?

As the property owner, you are responsible for all maintenance of your rain barrel or cistern.



Backyard rain barrel

MAINTENANCE & MONITORING

FREQUENCY*	ACTIVITY*
Semi-Annually	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remove any algae growth. • Remove leaves and debris from gutters and downspouts.
Annually	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clean storage tank lid. • Repair any clogging. • Repair mosquito screens.
Every 3 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remove any sediment build-up. • Clear overhanging vegetation and trees over roof. • Repair integrity of backflow preventer, if applicable. • Repair any damage to the structural integrity of tank and pipe.
As needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Replace damaged or defective system components

* Follow manufacturer's guidelines

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<https://www.annapolis.gov/450/Stormwater-Management>

This fact sheet provides SWM practices information and maintenance requirements that are general in nature. Additional maintenance may be required based on the unique nature of your stormwater management practice.

Troubleshooting Issues

Symptom	Possible Cause	Solution
Mosquitoes	Water allowed to sit in rain barrel too long.	A good way to prevent mosquito proliferation is to ensure that water is not allowed to remain undisturbed or pooled for more than a few days. Water should not be allowed to sit in the rain barrel for long periods of time. Also check for tears in mosquito screens
Stagnant water or algae growth	Water allowed to sit in rain barrel too long.	Empty rain barrels regularly. This will ensure that there is room in the barrel for future rain events and prevent undesired overflow.

INVASIVE PLANTS

“Invasive” describes a species that, when introduced into an ecosystem aggressively establishes itself at the expense of native plants or animals (*Maryland Department of Natural Resources*). Regularly inspect vegetation and remove invasive/nuisance plant species. For more information on invasive plants in Maryland, please go to the Maryland Department of Natural Resources website at: <http://dnr.maryland.gov/invasives/Pages/default.aspx>.

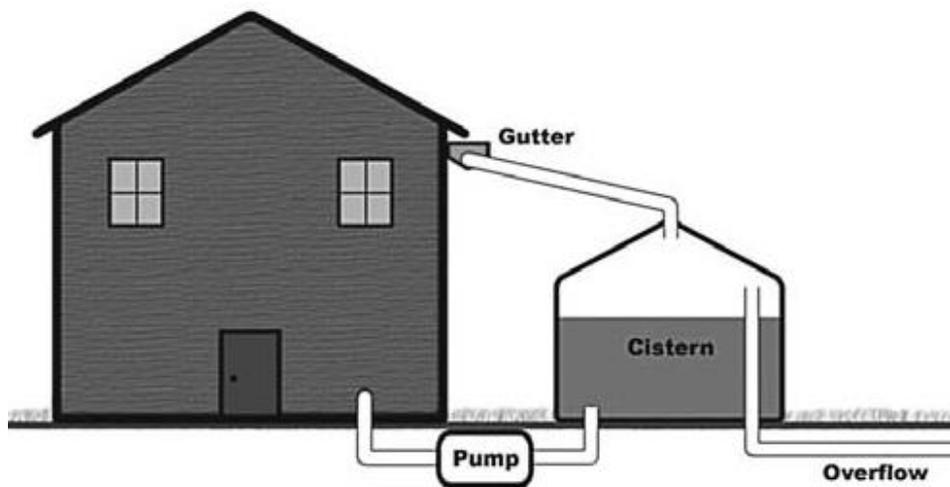


Diagram of aboveground cistern system (Source: College of Environmental Science & Forestry)