

Talk of the town: More focus needed on saving our local water

 dcourier.com/news/2018/apr/03/talk-town-more-focus-needed-saving-our-local-water



Large rain tanks at Prescott Station Restaurant. (Fred Oswald/courtesy)

FRED OSWALD

Originally Published: April 3, 2018 6:04 a.m.

The Prescott area is pumping water from its aquifer at approximately twice the rate at which it is replenished. The impact of this overdraft includes declining water levels in the aquifer and wells drying up in the western part of Chino Valley.

About one-third of annual household water used is for landscaping. This water can be saved by planting drought-tolerant plants and by irrigating with rainwater harvested in barrels or larger tanks.

Drought-tolerant plants can survive with little or no watering. Many of these plants are very attractive, and these are the plants that belong here. You can see attractive low-water-demand plants at the Adult Center on Rosser Street and at Prescott College on Grove Avenue. See the Drought Tolerant Plant List at <http://www.prescottwatersmart.com/listplants.php?index=1>.

You can harvest lots of water from your roof: A 1,000-square-foot roof can collect about 600 gallons from a 1-inch rainfall and more than 11,000 gallons over a year. Rainwater doesn't contain chlorine, salts or other chemicals, which makes it ideal for watering flowers and vegetable gardens. Using stored rain will lower your water bill.

Rain barrels come in various sizes from about 50 to over 1000 gallons. Smaller barrels can be "daisy chained" to provide more storage. Barrels can be purchased from stores or online or low-cost barrels can be made from used 50-gallon plastic food-grade drums. Rainwater can be collected passively by capturing it in swales (shallow basins) and allowing it to percolate into the ground. You can see a large system at the Prescott Station Restaurant on Gurley Street. The Citizens Water Advocacy Group (CWAG) website, cwagaz.org, has much helpful information, including a list of local vendors for low-water-use landscaping and rainwater harvesting.

With a little care, we can save significant water outdoors, protect the aquifer and save money on our water bills.

Prescott residents can get a City of Prescott rebate of \$0.50 per gallon up to \$500 for installing a rainwater harvesting system. Visit <http://www.waterrebates.com/az-prescott> for more information.

Three water-saving events will be held this month.

Apr. 14, 10 a.m.-noon. Landscape architect T. Barnabas Kane will present a CWAG-sponsored free workshop on drought-tolerant landscaping at the Granite Peak Unitarian Universalist Congregation building, 882 Sunset Ave., Prescott.

Apr. 14, 3-4:30 p.m. Landscape architect T. Barnabas Kane will discuss rainwater harvesting at the Prescott Public Library.

Apr. 21, 9 a.m. - noon. Stop by CWAG's Earth Day booth on the square, register to win a free rain barrel and learn more about our local water issues.

CWAG will hold a drawing for a free rain barrel donated by C-A-L Ranch with a diverter donated by a CWAG member. Tickets will be available at our Apr. 14 program and at our Earth Day booth.

Please submit questions or comments to info@cwagaz.org.

Fred Oswald is a CWAG board member and a retired NASA engineer.