

# actsmart<sup>®</sup>

## sources of water for your garden

Rainwater, greywater and bore water can be great sources of water for garden watering, particularly when used with efficient watering methods.





## Rainwater tanks

A simple way to use rainwater is to connect a tank to the closest downpipe and use a bucket, watering can, or a gravity-fed irrigation system to water your garden. This avoids the need for a pump.

### Tank size

The size of tank best suited to your needs depends on a number of factors, including:

- what roof area is available to capture the rain
- how you plan to use the rainwater
- how much rain falls each year
- what space is available to install a tank.

### Approvals and regulations

The ACT Planning and Land Authority can advise on any development, building or plumbing approvals required, and any plumbing regulations that must be met, for the installation of your tank.

### More information on rainwater tanks

The ACT Government's Rainwater Tanks – Guidelines for residential properties in Canberra (available from [www.planning.act.gov.au](http://www.planning.act.gov.au)) provides information about installation requirements, issues to consider, regulations and approvals, as well as tables and charts to assist you to choose the right size tank for your household. You can also estimate your water savings per year using the residential waterways calculator at [www.environment.act.gov.au](http://www.environment.act.gov.au)



## Greywater

Greywater is waste water generated from hand basins, showers, baths and spa baths, washing machines, laundry tubs, kitchen sinks and dishwashers. This fact sheet does not address blackwater use, which is waste water generated from toilets, urinals and bidets.

### Source of greywater suitable for your garden

Generally washing machine rinse-cycle water and basin, bath and shower water are the most suitable sources of greywater for garden watering. If you use low-salt, phosphorus free detergents you may not need to restrict the use of washing machine water to the rinse cycle only. However, laundry water from soiled nappies or wash water from domestic animals should not be used.

Greywater from kitchen sinks and dishwashers contain fats, oil and food particles, and alkaline detergents and cleaning agents, which over time may damage the soil and your plants. Kitchen water from these sources is not suitable for reuse on gardens.

### Storage and treatment of greywater

**Untreated** greywater must not be stored for more than 24 hours, as it may create a health risk due to the growth of microorganisms. Storage of greywater can also cause offensive odours. Greywater **treatment systems** are designed to remove microorganisms and pollutants from greywater, so it can be stored for longer periods. Before installing a treatment system, you should consider your responsibility to ensure the system is maintained so it does not create a public health or environmental risk. Often a professional is required to ensure efficient operation.

For more detailed information on greywater reuse see the ACT Government's Greywater Use – Guidelines for residential properties in Canberra, available from [www.health.act.gov.au](http://www.health.act.gov.au)

## Moving greywater into the garden

The simplest systems involved diverting greywater from the washing machine and/or bathroom directly to the garden or lawn. This can be achieved by:

- using a bucket or siphon to transfer water
- connecting the washing machine discharge hose to a diversion hose leading to the garden. A washing machine pump is designed to operate with minimal resistance. To protect the pump from damage, use a large diameter hose and only divert to areas lower than the height of the washing machine
- fitting the laundry tub waste pipe with an approved hand-operated diversion valve. You can then easily switch the plumbing diversion device to divert greywater, by gravity, from the laundry tub through a hose to the garden. This valve must carry a Watermark approval and can only be installed by a licensed plumber.

## Bores

In the ACT, new bores are no longer allowed on urban residential properties. Where there is an existing bore it can provide a valuable alternative to potable water.

The reliability of a bore can vary with time and is influenced by both climate and extraction rates. The cost of operation and maintenance depends on how deep the water lies below the surface. Water is tested prior to use and periodically over the life of a bore to ensure it is a suitable quality for its intended use.

Bore water that is high in dissolved minerals and salts may damage plant foliage, so always water the plant root zone.

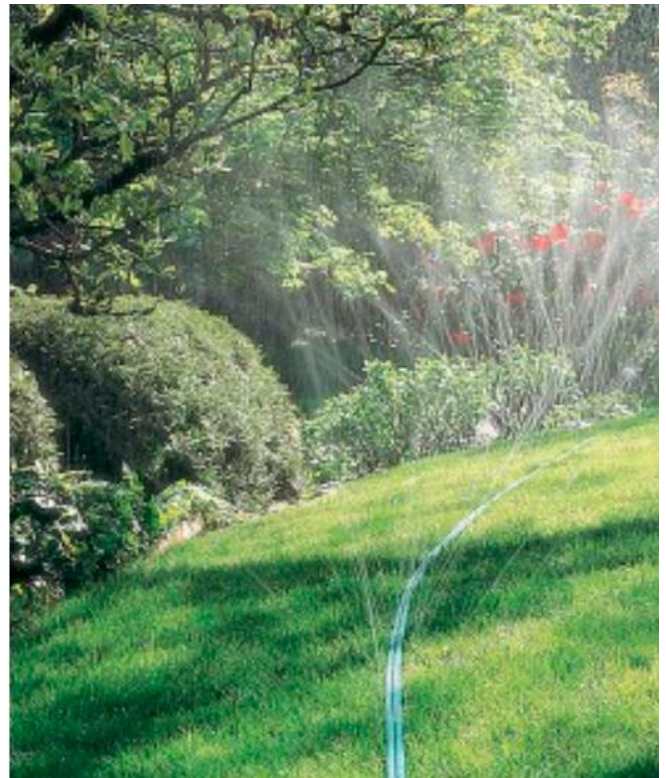
In the ACT, a **Water Access Entitlement** must be held before a licence to take water can be issued. A licence to take water is required for every bore.

### More information

Website: [www.actsmart.act.gov.au](http://www.actsmart.act.gov.au)

Phone: 13 22 81

Email: [Actsmart@act.gov.au](mailto:Actsmart@act.gov.au)



## Not sure how much water you need to keep your garden looking good?

Find out how plants, your soil, wind, shade and the seasons all affect your garden and lawn watering needs.

Enter your garden details into the WaterRight Gardens webtool to produce watering schedules and other helpful tips.

You can find the WaterRight Gardens webtool at [www.actsmart.act.gov.au](http://www.actsmart.act.gov.au).

## Need help to choose plants suitable for your garden?

The Canberra Plant Selector enables you to look up information on a range of plants found in Canberra gardens.

Knowing the growth habit, sun, shade and frost tolerances and the water requirements of plants can help you choose plants suited to your garden, and save water. You can find the Canberra Plant Selector at [www.actsmart-plantselector.com.au](http://www.actsmart-plantselector.com.au).

For more ideas, tips and information

visit: [actsmart.act.gov.au](http://actsmart.act.gov.au)

email: [actsmart@act.gov.au](mailto:actsmart@act.gov.au)

or call: 13 22 81

make (the) change