

HOUSE & GARDEN

Habitat for Humanity ReStore

The ReStore is a great place to pick up recycled building supplies at a fraction of what you'd pay at Home Depot. The selection of windows, doors, lumber and other fixtures is astonishing. You can even find the occasional hot tub, but remember: It's only open Wednesday-Saturday. 1143 Siler Park Lane, 473-1114

UTILITIES

Public Service Company of New Mexico (PNM)

Unless you're living off the grid, you'll have to deal with PNM, the gatekeeper for all gas and electric use in the state. If you've got good credit, aside from a nominal connection fee, you won't have to put down a deposit. If not, be prepared to cough up some dough. PNM's website is comprehensive and you can even pay your bills online.

2041 Pacheco St., 950-1830, 800-687-7854, www.pnm.com

City of Santa Fe Water Division

The city operates the water company which supplies homes with the endangered liquid. Know the rules regarding Stage 3 water restrictions in Santa Fe (see Water Conservation, page 26, for specifics), or you may find yourself slapped with a hefty surcharge. Sewage and refuse questions can also be fielded at the customer service office.

801 W. San Mateo Road, 955-4333

TRASH AND RECYCLING

City of Santa Fe Solid Waste Department

Trash pickup happens once a week within city limits, though which day depends on your neighborhood. You

can pick up a box of free, heavy-duty trash bags at the department's Siler Road offices. If your trash is too big for cans, you can truck it up to the transfer station, which is located off NM 599 (the bypass). If you're hauling trash on a level bed pickup, the cost to is \$5 (tarp your trash while transporting it). Anything more is pro-rated at \$55 per ton. Dumping the equivalent of five trash cans will run you \$3, and for senior citizens it's only half of that. The landfill is open from 7 am to 4 pm every day.

Recycling is picked up every other week within the city, and bins are provided for free with proof of residency at the Solid Waste Department offices. You must separate glass from aluminum and plastics, so obtain at least two bins. Newspapers can be put out in bags instead of the old twine method. You can also drop recycling at the transfer station off the bypass. 1142 Siler Road, 955-2208; Caja del Rio landfill, 424-1850

Santa Fe County Public Works Department

While you can't get your trash picked up if you live outside of the city, you do get a punchcard which allows you 24 free trips to the landfill. The cards cost three bucks, but if you go over 24 visits, they'll slap you with a \$10 charge each time. Transfer stations are in Tesuque, Nambe, La Cienega, San Marcos, Eldorado, Jacona/Pojoaque and Stanley/Edgewood.

If you live outside city limits, you can deliver recyclables directly to one of Santa Fe County's transfer stations (see above). No permit is required for recycling.

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Nate Downey

LOCAL EXPERT

PRESIDENT, SANTA FE PERMACULTURE

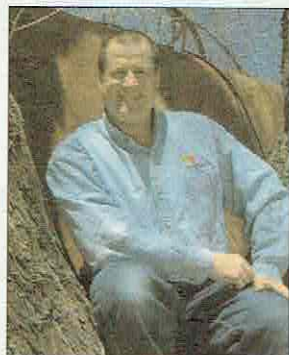
Lifeless earth, air raid style hailstorms, monsoons of mass destruction and strict water rationing often make many high desert gardeners think of their land as a battlefield.

Beyond the metaphorical similarities, there is an undeniable ethical parallel between war and desert gardening. When we go to war, we worry about our children coming home safely. When we garden here in the Southwest, we worry about our grandchildren having enough water after we've sucked the aquifer dry.

Fortunately, we no longer have to choose between our gardens and our grandchildren. A wide variety of systems and techniques, if properly applied, can make your garden "aquifer-independent." Coupled with an appropriate landscape design, you can now give peace a chance in your own backyard—without any nagging guilt about creating an impossible situation for future generations.

The most fundamental system is a precipitation collection system that catches the water that cascades off of your roof during and after every storm. Run-off simply flows through pipes to a cistern. A pump then directs water to your plants via drip irrigation. Given 12 inches of precipitation per year, a 1,000 square-foot roof can harvest 7,500 gallons of water. This is more than enough to establish and maintain a colorful, comfortable and self-sustaining landscape, especially if you don't plant a lawn.

Thanks to a new law, gray water recycling is now available to home-



owners. Gray water, defined as all wastewater except kitchen sink, dishwasher and toilet waste (black water), can now be used safely and efficiently in the residential landscape as long as certain

best management practices are followed.

There are also many excellent filtration systems that can treat black water on site. Ultimately, this treated water can be recycled through every component in the plumbing system except drinking water pipes. When these systems become mainstream, not only our gardens, but also entire subdivisions will become aquifer-independent.

The cost of these systems range from almost nothing to the tens of thousands of dollars, depending on the complexity of the system. Financing for these types of systems is available from the Permaculture Credit Union (954-3479).

If, for whatever reason, you cannot install one of the above systems in the near future, there are many passive water harvesting techniques that you should consider applying before the next, precious rain. These include on-contour swales, French drains and pumice wicks. Most importantly, a three- to four-inch deep layer of mulch should be maintained at the base of all of your plants and trees.

It seems northern New Mexico suffers not from a lack of water, but from a lack of inspiration and information. In between our prayers for peace and precipitation, let's leave behind sustainable water systems for the simple reason that we can.