



- NEWS
- OPINION
- BOULDERGANIC
- ADVENTURE
- ENTERTAINMENT
- CUISINE
- FEATURES
- EVENTS
- SPECIAL EDITIONS

boulderganic

Harvest the rain: Know what's legal

By Charmaine Ortega Getz - April 7, 2011

In the state of Colorado, those with water rights already have dibs on the rain that falls on your property, unless you have your own well (and even that has limits).

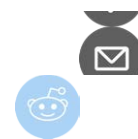
If you use municipal water, you can't use a rain barrel or cistern to collect rain that would otherwise run off or disappear into areas where it's not needed. Having a private well may grant you a permit to use rainwater for irrigation, but not if the well is already restricted for household use.

(There is currently a Colorado pilot program to test rainwater catchment systems in new housing developments, but that won't do anything for most of us today.)

Still, you don't have to be resigned to the status quo.

Yes, there are legal ways to keep more and "harvest the rain" for yourself, as the title

share this story



Our sponsors love Boulder

HOLIDAY GIFT CARD SALES!

Gift Card
BODYWORK BISTRO

deals

of a new book proposes. Not only is it in the best interests of a community to sustain itself on local water, but our waterways need help to keep soil and contaminants from flowing into them after rain slides off our roofs.

So says author Nate Downey, owner of a Santa Fe landscape design firm who writes on permaculture for the Santa Fe New Mexican newspaper. His *Harvest the Rain* is published by Sunstone Press and available on his website (www.harvesttherain.com/index.html), as well as the usual book outlets.

"Conservation only puts off the problem in the sense that throughout the Southwest and much of the world our water resources are depleted," says Downey. "We have to do more than conserve."

For example, the Ogallala Aquifer, which extends from South Dakota to Texas — the High Plains' lifeblood for all uses — is losing out to demand instead of seeing sustainable restoration from rain and snowmelt.

And global climate change is making reliable supplies of clean water that much more problematic.

Fortunately, current and future water shortages can be alleviated with better utilization and technology — if we demand it and act on it.

All water — even the kind considered "gray" or even "black" by purity standards — can be cleaned to the point of being safe to drink. However, current technology is not yet cost-effective enough for this to become widespread practice, says Downey. In the meantime, there's still valuable usage left in "wastewater" for irrigation and other needs.

You can find a few sample chapters of Downey's book online at <http://bit.ly/nate-downey>. For more information on our state's water laws and what is currently permitted, check out "Graywater Reuse and Rainwater Harvesting" from the Colorado State University extension at www.ext.colostate.edu/pubs/natres/06702.html.

And for a more hands-on kind of how-to, there are local classes to check out.

Transition Colorado and Real Earth Design! are offering weekend workshops April 16-17. The cost is \$65 each day.

Information and registration are available at www.transitioncolorado.org/events.php. For more information, contact Jason Gerhardt by calling 303-258-7982 or by e-mail



Our sponsors love Boulder



our latest issue

Available at over 1,000 locations across Boulder County, and of course right here online



[Past issue archives](#)

from our latest issue

'An injury to one is an injury to all'



at info@transitioncolorado.org.

In addition, Harlequin's Gardens is offering a one-day "Introduction to Rainwater Harvesting" class on Saturday, July 16, at 1:30 p.m. The cost is \$15, and early registration is strongly encouraged. Harlequin's is located at 4795 N. 26th St. in Boulder, and can be reached at 303- 939-9403. Also see www.harlequinsgardens.com.

Respond: letters@boulderweekly.com

SHARE     

Previous article

Recording Academy aims for a more focused Grammys, slashes 31 categories

Next article

Fourmile: On the road to recovery

RELATED ARTICLES

MORE FROM AUTHOR



Conservation for All, even renters
December 1, 2016



'The biggest case on the planet'
November 17, 2016



Surpassing Earthly politics
November 9, 2016



December 1, 2016

Which brain would you choose?



December 1, 2016

Forced pooling is not mandatory swim practice



December 1, 2016

Inappropriate laughter



December 1, 2016

It is what it is



December 1, 2016

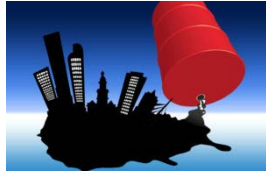


Our sponsors love Boulder

Must-Reads



The new harvest of rage



Behind closed doors



Opposite of America



A turning point



Behind the curtain

