

# 11 Compelling Reasons to Embrace Rainwater Harvesting for Sustainable Living



Rainwater harvesting is the practice of collecting and storing rainwater for later use. It can be a key component of sustainable living. If you garden, then you can't help but notice the changes to the earth. As a result, you might feel a drive to live more sustainably. Rainwater harvesting for sustainable living makes a lot of sense. You'll see that there are some really compelling reasons to give it a try at your own home.

## What Is Rainwater Harvesting?

As the name explains, this is the process of harvesting rain. In other words, when it rains, you collect that water. Then

you make use of it. Rainwater harvesting [includes](#) catching the water, filtering it, storing it, and then using it. Rainwater harvesting is an effective way to conserve water resources, implement [integrated urban water management](#) strategies, and promote sustainability.

## **What Is Sustainable Living?**

Sustainable living refers to a lifestyle that aims to minimize one's ecological footprint and promote practices that are environmentally responsible, socially just, and economically viable. It involves making conscious choices and taking actions that reduce the negative impact on the planet and contribute to the well-being of both present and future generations. Rainwater harvesting for sustainable living is just one component of a whole lifestyle. As someone interested in frugal gardening, you may also already embrace many other elements of sustainable living.

## **Compelling Reasons to Embrace Rainwater Harvesting for Sustainable Living**

Here are some of the reasons that you might want to take the leap into rainwater harvesting for sustainable living.

### **Rainwater Is Great For Your Garden**

Rainwater harvesting is commonly used for watering gardens and landscaping. Rainwater is an excellent source of water for plants because it is free of chlorine, fluoride, and other chemicals typically found in tap water. Additionally, rainwater is naturally soft and slightly acidic, which is beneficial for many plants. Since you already garden, why not take advantage of the opportunity to water the garden with rain?

## **A short list of the benefits of rainwater harvesting for your garden includes:**

- Provides a free and abundant water supply for garden irrigation.
- Reduces reliance on municipal or groundwater sources for garden watering.
- Offers a natural and chemical-free water source, beneficial for plant health.
- Helps conserve potable water for essential household needs.
- Reduces water bills and overall water consumption.
- Supports sustainable gardening practices and environmental stewardship.
- Prevents soil erosion and nutrient runoff by controlling the intensity of watering.
- Allows for more efficient water distribution directly to plant roots.
- Improves soil moisture retention, especially in dry climates.
- Reduces the risk of overwatering, which can harm plants and promote disease.
- Promotes self-sufficiency and resilience by providing an independent water supply.
- Can be used for other garden-related activities, such as washing gardening tools or containers.
- Encourages water-conscious behavior and environmental awareness.
- Enhances overall garden health, growth, and productivity.
- Can be integrated with other sustainable gardening practices, such as composting or mulching.

## **Rainwater Harvesting for Sustainable**

# **Living Helps Earth's Water Situation**

Sustainable living is all about being good to the Earth. Water is key on our planet. Water conservation and water scarcity are two aspects that help us reduce water waste and increase water availability around the world. They're similar but also different:

## **Water Conservation**

Water conservation refers to the efficient use and management of water resources to minimize wastage and preserve water for future generations. Rainwater harvesting contributes to water conservation by collecting and utilizing rainwater for various purposes, reducing the need for freshwater from traditional sources. By using harvested rainwater for activities like irrigation, toilet flushing, or washing clothes, you conserve potable water that would otherwise be consumed for those tasks.

## **Mitigating Water Scarcity**

Water scarcity occurs when the demand for water exceeds the available supply, leading to insufficient access to water for human and environmental needs. Rainwater harvesting helps mitigate water scarcity by providing an additional source of water. By capturing and storing rainwater, you reduce the strain on existing water sources, such as groundwater or municipal supply, especially during periods of drought or water shortages. Harvested rainwater can serve as a valuable backup or alternative water source to supplement traditional supplies, thereby increasing water availability and reducing scarcity risks.

## **Other Environmental Benefits of Rainwater Harvesting for Sustainable Living**

In addition to the water benefits of rainwater harvesting,

there are some other important environmental benefits that make for compelling reasons to try rainwater harvesting for sustainable living.

## **Reduces Strain on Stormwater Management Systems**

Rainwater harvesting helps reduce the volume of stormwater runoff entering municipal stormwater management systems. By capturing rainwater from rooftops and other surfaces, you decrease the load on storm drains and sewage treatment plants. This can prevent overflow situations during heavy rainfall, which can lead to pollution of water bodies and strain on infrastructure.

## **Supports Local Ecosystems**

By reducing stormwater runoff, rainwater harvesting helps maintain the natural water balance in local ecosystems. This is particularly important in urban areas where impervious surfaces like roads and buildings dominate the landscape. By allowing rainwater to infiltrate into the ground or using it for irrigation, you help replenish groundwater levels, support vegetation growth, and provide water for wildlife habitats.

## **Minimizes Erosion and Soil Degradation**

Traditional stormwater runoff can cause erosion and soil degradation due to the force and volume of water rushing over surfaces. Rainwater harvesting systems, such as rain gardens or infiltration basins, capture and slow down the flow of rainwater, allowing it to infiltrate into the soil. This helps replenish groundwater and reduces erosion, promoting healthier soil conditions and preserving land integrity.

## **Reduces Demand on Energy-Intensive Water Treatment**

Rainwater harvesting decreases the demand for water from centralized systems, which often rely on energy-intensive treatment processes. By utilizing harvested rainwater for non-potable uses like irrigation or toilet flushing, you reduce

the need for water treatment, pumping, and distribution. This indirectly lowers the energy consumption and associated carbon emissions of water treatment facilities, contributing to a greener and more sustainable infrastructure.

## **Mitigates Urban Heat Island Effect**

The urban heat island effect occurs when urban areas experience higher temperatures than surrounding rural areas due to the concentration of buildings, pavement, and lack of vegetation. Rainwater harvesting, when combined with green infrastructure practices, such as green roofs or rain gardens, can help mitigate this effect. Vegetation and green spaces associated with rainwater harvesting systems help cool the environment through evapotranspiration, shading, and reducing heat radiation, creating a more comfortable and sustainable urban environment.

## **Self-Sufficiency**

By collecting rainwater, you become less reliant on external water sources. Therefore, you experience a greater degree of self-sufficiency. This is particularly advantageous in rural areas. It's also important during emergencies when access to water may be limited. Having a rainwater harvesting system in place ensures a more reliable and independent water supply.

## **Community Sustainability Education**

Implementing rainwater harvesting systems in your home can serve as an educational tool for your family and community. It raises awareness about water conservation, sustainability, and the importance of utilizing alternative water sources. You can inspire others to adopt similar practices, fostering a more environmentally conscious community. If you participate in community gardens then you know how much this type of education benefits everyone.

## Collecting Rainwater Saves You Money

Finally, sustainable living also means living within your financial means. Using rainwater for various household needs can lead to significant cost savings over time. Depending on your location and water usage, rainwater harvesting can help lower your water bills by reducing the amount of water you consume from traditional sources. This is particularly beneficial in areas with high water costs or where water metering is in place.

### Read More:

- [Harvesting Rainwater for the Frugal Gardener](#)
  - [4 Frugal DIY Drip Irrigation Systems](#)
  - [5 Plants That Easily Grow in Water](#)
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## What Happens to Plants If You Use Enviro Ice on Them?



About one year ago, I wrote an [article here about Enviro Ice](#). Companies use this product to keep items cold for shipping. I receive it in my [HungryRoot](#) food deliveries each month. According to the company, you can use this nitrogen-based product to fertilize your plants. I considered trying it. However, for reasons explained in the article, I didn't actually ever end up doing so. Nevertheless, many people have asked me what I think about using it. Therefore, I decided to scour the Internet for information from people who have tried it. Here's what I found.

## **Why I Haven't Tried Enviro Ice on My Plants**

I don't keep too many plants myself. I live in an apartment in San Francisco. Moreover, I'm not great with plants. As a result, I have to be careful to follow directions exactly if I have any chance of keeping plants alive. I'm just not



intuitive about it like so many other people are. On more than one occasion, I've called my sister, who was a plant sciences major, to ask her what one of my plants might need.

There isn't a lot of information out there about using Enviro Ice on plants. It's something that even the company itself seems to be studying. Therefore, there aren't great specific instructions. In other words, I can't find anything that says, "use this amount of Enviro Ice this often to get good results for your plants." There definitely don't seem to be instructions for using it on specific plants. So, even though I still get Enviro Ice every week, I haven't tried it on any plants. Instead, I put it down my sink drain as described in my original article.

## **The Big Questions**

I turned to the Internet to find out what people are saying about using Enviro Ice on their plants. Mostly, I scoured Reddit, although there are a few other forum and blog posts about it that you can easily find in a Google search. A few key questions came up:

### **What Form of Nitrogen Is In Enviro Ice?**

I confess that I don't fully understand the science behind this. However, several people online have asked what form of nitrogen or nitrogen compound this product is or contains. Apparently there are different forms of it. The company says that Enviro Ice is "nitrogen based." However, that doesn't give information about the form of nitrogen, which would apparently be important for people seeking to use it on plants.

### **What Else Is In Enviro Ice?**

This is the most frequent question. People who are going to use Enviro Ice on their plants want to know about ALL of the

ingredients that might be in this product. Unfortunately, as far as I can find, we don't have this information. There are two key problems that people bring up:

- Is there anything else in the product that could harm plants, soil, or other living garden things? Presumably, the answer should be no. After all, they advertise clearly that it's safe to use in your garden. They state specifically on [their website](#), "When thawed and diluted with water, the Enviro Ice coolant mixture is a safe, suitable fertilizer for both indoor and outdoor plants." Nevertheless, without specific information about the ingredients in the product, we just have to take their word on its safety.
- Is there anything in the product that I don't want to consume? In other words, if I'm growing fruits and vegetables that I plan to eat, is Enviro Ice safe for use? Obviously, people have a diverse range of food sensitivities. Therefore, this isn't a simple question. Either way, we don't have a clear answer on the ingredients yet.

## **Perhaps the Ingredients Are ...**

I asked ChatGPT if it could tell me what is in Enviro Ice. I'm not sure how accurate it's information was, since I couldn't find it elsewhere, but it claims: "The gel in Enviro Ice is made from a blend of natural ingredients, including seaweed extract, plant-based amino acids, and other plant-derived nutrients. "

In a thread over on [Houzz](#), user toxcruasadr said that they couldn't find the ingredients. However, they suspect that it's "probably ammonium nitrate solution, which is just nitrogen fertilizer." Moreover, they say that the gel is probably "polyethylene glycol (PEG) which is actually a food ingredient." That's the best guess I was able to find online.

# What Happens When You Use Enviro Ice on Plants?

Okay, so those are the questions that people have. Over on Reddit and around the web, I've found a few people who responded to these questions. They have tried the product on their plants and documented their experiences. The experience were varied. However, when looked at as a whole, they indicate that with proper dilution, Enviro Ice does work safely to help plants grow.

## Enviro Ice Works on Plants When Diluted

User KimAlex17 shared on [Reddit](#) two years ago that it works great on their plants. They actually called the customer service number to ask about how to use it. They followed the recommendation to dilute the gel, using one gallon of water per 16 ounces of gel. They say that they have 77 happy plants.

Similarly, in the same thread, user Optimal\_Cheetah3755 reports using it on a moth orchid plant. It sprouted new leaves and new roots. They say they use just 1-2 teaspoons of the gel per plant. They dilute that with water, although they didn't say how much.

## In Fact, It Might Be Great For Trees

In the same thread, user ISK\_Reynolds tried the product on two young indoor trees. They used three packs diluted with two gallons of water. They put this on one of the trees, but not on the other one. The one that received the diluted Enviro Ice is thriving better than the one that did not.

## Failure to Dilute Can Burn Plants and Soil

Several people reported that Enviro Ice didn't work for them.

They said it burned either the plant or the soil or both. However, in all cases, it seems that they either didn't dilute the soil or didn't sufficiently dilute it.

## **Can You Grow Plants in Just EnviroIce?**

In the same thread, user AJ\_Effendi talks about trying to grow water plants in just the gel. This is atypical. Most people are using it to fertilize the soil around their plants. This user found that some cuttings have survived well in the gel. Their stems are a bit squishy but above the waterline they do grow. That said, some died. It was a mixed experiment.

## **Additional Links:**

- [5 Reasons To Use Fish Amino Acid On Your Plants](#)
- [Does My Brown Thumb Make Gardening a Waste of Money?](#)
- [4 Cost-Effective Organic Garden Fertilizers](#)