

# Double Glaze Matters

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## Sustainable Living Festival

My stall at the sustainable Living Festival attracted a lot of attention with over 500 people taking brochures. Most thought it was a great idea, although were not necessarily willing to give it a go! But it is a good start.



## Water tanks-Provided by Don Nicholson

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We catch approximately half the water runoff from our roofs. Not having the space in the garden to install a really decent sized tank – I'd like at least 40 KL capacity. If you start interfering with the mains water system or the drains there is a legal requirement to use a licensed plumber. Check with your local authorities before starting anything in this line.

Instead of one large tank I've used 4 smaller ones that I have acquired, 2 x 2 KL, & 2 x 1KL. Where slope has allowed I have run the overflow from the higher tank into the lower tank & I then take the water from the lower tank first. These overflows are run in cheap 50mm rubber hose hidden in the garden & probably should be buried (but they are out

of sight & accessible for inspection & maintenance when required) Overflow from the tanks when they're full or inflow is too great for them to handle needs to be thought of too. You do NOT want the excess running under your house, undermining the driveway or creating a nuisance on the neighbor's place.

A cheap pressure pump from our local Bunnings – one of those that sense water flow to turn them on provides us with our rain water at any point at a useable pressure. Here is the trick – the pressure is quite low, & provided it isn't connected to the mains in any way it doesn't need to be run in copper, gal or expensive nylon tubing. The

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### Disclaimer

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## Water tanks-Don Nicholson (cont)

12mm dripper hose is about \$5/30m & has more than enough strength to carry this sort of light load. Input to the pump is via a dripper system filter & fittings & output is once again through cheap dripper system fittings & hose. I have run the 12mm black polythene tube round the fence line with tee pieces & normal garden taps where I want to take water off. Either use the black plastic clips that are part of the dripper system, normal wormdrive hose clips or electrical tape tourniquets at the joints. Once again time spent browsing in the pipe fittings section of your hardware store sorting out what you need is more satisfying than doing a jigsaw puzzle.

When our storage is over quarter full it is connected to the cold water inlet of the washing machine by screwing the inlet hose onto the 3/4" male threaded barb mounted in the end of the 12mm dripper hose. The tank water is used to wash our clothes then is let out into the garden to water the plants. (see last month). At a quarter capacity we switch the washing machine back onto the mains rather than risk running the pump dry (& not leaving us any rainwater for the garden)

When water is not needed we turn the pump off, just in case the system springs a leak.

It is necessary to monitor the levels in the various tanks & switch between them to equalize the space left in each for the next fall of rain. Measuring levels in a tank is easy – if the sun shines on it run your hand down the side & feel the temperature change at the top of the water or tap it & listen/feel the change, look inside, fit a tank gauge. You need to fit a fine mesh over all openings or you will find yourself breeding mosquitoes.

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The pump needs to be mounted at the level of the bottom of your lowest tank & when priming it you will need to let water flow out of the pump under gravity to get air out of it. You will need to reprime it if you let it run dry. The pump will stop before it harms itself but will not always reprime automatically.

Keep your spouting clear & in good condition – once you start harvesting rainwater it's really frustrating to lose nearly all of a nice cloud-burst because the downpipe is blocked.

### Simple Water Level Gauge

When I installed my tank, I wanted a simple way to tell how full it was. So I got a plastic bottle half full of water in the tank, attached via some fishing line, through a small hole in the tank and via some wire guides to a weight outside. Nice and simple and it works really well!

