



by Bernadell Larson, HCMG

Celebrate Those Water Tanks

Maybe it is time for a change in how we view and display water tanks in our landscaping and yards. Simple and complex rainwater harvesting systems are becoming more common, especially with the drought conditions in our area. They are going to be an even more important part of our society with predictions that Texas will not have enough water to meet the population needs in the next 30 to 50 years.



Why not celebrate these catchment and storage tanks? There is a 5,000 gallon fiberglass tank in Dripping Springs that is painted like a turtle. It is various shades of green and looks so whimsical sitting among the trees at Tank Town. Large storage containers can be made of fiberglass, polypropylene; concrete, timber clad, metal, rock, etc. The fiberglass can be easily painted with normal house paint and the others can be easily painted with paint appropriate for the medium. Of course don't limit yourself to the idea of paint; the options are only limited to the imagination.

This storage tank at the home of a HCMG was painted to blend with the stonework of the house. The crossvine from the trellis has been allowed to grow over the tank for more to further camouflage the tank.

For you gardeners who do not want to install a large collection system, there are many options of smaller collections tanks; some as small as 40 gallons. Ong jars are an alternative and are widely used in Thailand to capture rainwater for gardens. The Ong jars are made of concrete and can be painted or stained and come with a hose bib and galvanized metal lid that will accommodate a gutter downspout.

Currently ong jars are a rather expensive alternative, but as the jars become more readily available, the prices will begin to come down. At left is an example of an ong jar from Thailand.



Photo courtesy of Big Grass Bamboo,
San Antonio, Texas

You can even make your own storage container. The Hill Country Master Gardeners recently offered a workshop on making rain barrels out of 55-gallon drums. You can contact the HCMG at 830.257.6568 to purchase one.

If you choose to make your own rainwater collection vessel or purchase a large storage system, get creative with your design and don't hide it! Make it one of the focal points of your garden.