



Rainwater Harvesting

101:

Choosing a Rainwater Harvesting Contractor

Rainwater harvesting provides an on-site water source that can reduce demand on wells or the municipal water system, provide a back-up supply during times of drought, and decrease stormwater runoff. A rainwater harvesting system will meet the above goals when designed, installed and maintained correctly. However, poor design, installation, or maintenance of a system can lead to water quality problems that can potentially cause illness, lead to the system being a breeding ground for mosquitoes, or lead to overall system failure. Because of this, choosing the right contractor for your rainwater harvesting job is essential. The contractor should be bonded, licensed, insured, and in good standing. Here are additional things to look for in a rainwater harvesting contractor.

What to look for in a contractor:

1) At least one person working on the job should be ARCSA/ASSE certified. The ASSE Series 21110 Rainwater Catchment Systems Installer Certification requires a combination of classroom time and hands-on experience with rainwater harvesting systems. Completion of this certification demonstrates familiarity with national best practices and experience working with a range of rainwater harvesting systems.

2) The contractor can show you multiple previous rainwater harvesting jobs of similar scale. Before selecting a rainwater harvesting contractor, be sure the contractor has experience with jobs like yours. Just as you wouldn't want a contractor who only builds sheds to build a large school, you should be sure that your rainwater harvesting contractor has experience with jobs of the same size and complexity as yours.

3) The contractor is familiar with state and local codes for rainwater harvesting. State and local codes for rainwater harvesting vary widely. Be sure the contractor is familiar with local regulations and

local incentives, such as tax rebates and stormwater credits, for rainwater harvesting.

4) The contractor has someone who you can contact for any follow-up problems who will be able to come to your site. Ideally, you will never have a problem with your rainwater harvesting system, but you should make sure that your contractor has someone available who can visit the site if you do have problems. This can be a local representative from the contractor or the contractor themselves, but a local presence is important.

5) The scope of work (exactly what the contractor will do and what others are expected to do) is clear. Before starting on a rainwater harvesting project, you want to be sure it will be finished. A rainwater harvesting system can involve design, excavating, plumbing, and more. Be sure the work to be done by the contractor is clear and that the contractor has explained if any parts of the job will be done by a qualified subcontractor.

6) The contractor clearly explains any maintenance requirements. A good rainwater harvesting system should be low-maintenance, but even with a low-maintenance system, understanding the maintenance requirements and performing routine maintenance is essential to keep the system functioning properly. A good contractor should be able to clearly explain the required maintenance (see Fact Sheet 3).

