



2009 CSREES National Water Conference; St. Louis, MO

Advancing Rainwater Harvesting Education

Billy Kniffen, Frank Henning*, Bruce Pinkerton
CSREES-EPA R4
* fhenning@uga.edu

Abstract:

According to the US Census Bureau, population in the US increased by over 85% between 1950 and 2000, at the same time USGS estimates indicate that domestic water use increased over 300%. US population growth is projected to increase by 49% between 2000 and 2050. Rainwater harvesting systems address many water issues associated with population growth and urban expansion; they reduce consumption, improve stormwater quality, increase infiltration, and moderate episodic runoff patterns. In southern states where growth is projected to be higher than the national average, harvested rainwater may be critical for meeting agricultural and domestic water demand.

Technical improvements, new materials, incentive programs, and regulatory amendments may increase rain harvesting. However, education is the key to expanding the use of harvested rainwater. Extension outreach and continuing education programs that began in Texas and Arizona are improving rainwater harvesting education for youth and adults across the country. The value of rainwater harvesting is being successfully delivered through a Rainwater Taskforce, Master Gardener programs, Master Naturalist programs, Rainwater Harvesting workshops, demonstration sites, Extension publications, video productions, professional accreditation workshops, and professional association activities.

A few highlights of these educational efforts include: 8 Master Gardener 'Rainwater Specialist' workshops that trained 225 volunteers and generated over 2,000 hours of service in rainwater harvesting (pictures and handouts are available online: <http://rainwaterharvesting.tamu.edu/images.html>), an advanced Master Gardener WaterSmart landscape series that was broadcast to 23 sites in GA, SC, TN and AL, over 25 demonstration sites that were established to educate schools, public officials, trainers, and anyone interested in installing systems, a rainwater harvesting training video developed by TAMU, UGA and Clemson, and Professional Accreditation workshops for the American Rainwater Catchment Systems Association that were conducted in 3 states. In addition, the first draft of a TAMU publication titled "Planning and Installation" was completed in 2008.

Impact Statement:

8 Master Gardener Rainwater Specialist workshops trained 225 volunteers and generated over 2,000 hours of service in rainwater harvesting

Rainharvesting was a major component of an advanced Master Gardener WaterSmart landscape series that was broadcast to 23 sites in GA, SC, TN and AL

Over 25 demonstration sites were established to educate schools, public officials, trainers, and anyone interested in installing systems

A rainwater harvesting training video developed in a cooperative effort between TAMU, UGA and Clemson

Professional Accreditation workshops for the American Rainwater Catchment Systems Association were conducted in 3 states

The first draft of a TAMU publication titled "Planning and Installation" was completed in 2008

Category: Conservation and Resource Management

Type of Presentation: Oral Presentation