

Why collect water?

- Treated mains drinking water isn't all that great for the environment – or the allotment.
- It has to be extracted from somewhere.
- It has to be purified and then stored, before finally being pumped to where we need it.
- This requires (a) a lot of energy and (b) an inordinate volume of chemicals to treat the water.
- AND environmentally IT COSTS A LOT! Cripely meadow has been growing crops since 1894 with no piped water on site and we hope to keep it that way.

Rainfall or groundwater?

- Rainfall: simple to collect but can be unreliable from month to month – large storage volumes necessary to cope with drought. Wendy has 9 water butts distributed over 2. Plots and has never used the river or a communal butt.
- Rainfall: few if any energy costs – usually relies on gravity
- **Groundwater or rivers: more reliable sources for collection. Start-up and maintenance costs are greater**
- **Groundwater or rivers: will require energy to pump water for storage**

Collecting rainfall

- It's surprising just how much water it is possible to collect from a shed roof
- Working out this potential requires a simple calculation
- Multiply the area of your shed roof in square metres* by the average annual rainfall in millimetres • Multiply this by 0.75 to account for evaporation and rain bouncing off the roof and you have the number of litres per year you could be collecting. * For imperial units, multiply your roof area in square feet by the annual rainfall total in inches. Now divide by 12 to convert to cubic feet and, as above, multiply by 0.75 to account for water loss. To convert cubic feet to gallons multiply by 6.2.
- Water butts can be fitted to intercept a downpipe coming off the shed roof
- If you have space link several together so as one fills up the water begins to fill the next



- Covering water butts with lids will reduce contamination, stop insects from breeding and prevent it becoming clogged with algae. Covered barrels are essential for safety if younger children visit
- Try and elevate or locate water butts uphill from the growing area so that gravity will distribute the water
- Make sure the base is level and supportive. Water butt will get very heavy when full.