

Presenter: Colin Campbell, 06/10/2007

With much of Australia experiencing drought, plus watering restrictions, many homeowners have bought water tanks. But how do you know what size and which one to buy?

Ken Krenske has been in the water business for over 40 years. He says there are many tanks around including the traditional galvanised water tanks, polyethylene tanks, concrete, in ground, above-ground, bladder tanks and under-deck tanks – which are great for smaller blocks without much room.

He reckons the best sized tanks are a minimum 3000 litre for a small block and a minimum 5000 litre for a large block. “Before installing a tank, people should check with their local government. In some areas tanks should be installed at least a minimum of 450 millimetres from the property boundary line. It’s also important to take into account extra weight and whether it’s located near a retaining wall. All tanks also need a minimum of a prepared base that’s retained with crusher dust or concrete. But all slimline tanks, for safety reasons, must be installed on concrete.”

“There’s a simple equation - for every square metre of roof, and a millimetre of rain, a litre of water is collected. This means that a 100 square metre roof, if 20-millimetres of rain fell, would collect 2000 litres of water.”

Ken advises tank owners to also install a pump because it’s difficult to rely on a gravity fed system. “Often it’s impossible to get a tank that’s high enough to make it effective. The tank would need to be built at least six metres off the ground for enough pressure to run a small sprinkler or garden hose, and that’s very expensive. It’s far better value to install a pump.”

Ken suggests that to deliver water effectively to the garden, gardeners install a system that has a controlled emitter, built into the pipe. “It ensures the same amount of water is released on the garden even if there are height variations.”

According to Ken the culture has now changed. “People install a water tank, and then turn from water wasters into water misers. You see them out in the backyard, tapping the tanks to see how much water is left. They’ve got the water and they’ve learnt that you can’t afford to waste it.”

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