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We need to collect rainwater



OPINION

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We might take it for granted, but water is one of the most precious and scarce natural resource on our planet.

Awareness has been on the rise with respect to the importance of water to our survival, especially in a dry country such as South Africa.

It is true that close to three-fourths of our planet is made of water, but not all of it is suitable for use.

The water in the oceans and seas cannot be used as drinking water, and little of it can be utilised for other purposes. As a result, there is a constant shortage of water that is good for drinking or home and industrial use.

South Africa has experienced recently its worst drought in many years and the rains that are now falling in some parts of the country have brought some important relief, but we need to understand that the rain is not yet yielding significant benefits. And the worst is not over yet as we continue to experience climate change.

Climate change seems to many an Armageddon in slow motion and its dangers can feel impersonal and its causes diffused. It is easy to think: "I didn't cause this", or: "It doesn't directly affect me." But there is another way to look at it. Like Covid-19, if you are concerned about climate change, you can take actions right now to improve your rela-

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tionship with water, your health and the health of your friends and loved ones.

It falls upon all of us to conserve the little water we have. We need to store the water from the rain and not let it run off and go to waste. We need to practice rainwater harvesting to ensure that we have enough stored water for use in our households.

To reduce the consumption of groundwater, many people around the world are using rainwater harvesting systems. This practice has been around for thousands of years and has been growing at a rapid pace.

In areas where there is excess rainfall, the surplus rainwater can be used to recharge groundwater through artificial recharge techniques.

Still today, rainwater is used as a primary source of drinking water in many rural areas. The best thing about rainwa-

ter is that it is free from pollutants as well as salts, minerals and other natural and human-made contaminants.

Everyone can harvest rainwater using water tanks, drums and even buckets to collect the rainwater running off the roofs of their houses.

Rainwater harvesting can also assist in minimising the amount of money spent on buying water credits as the harvested rainwater will be utilised for some of the activities in our homes like the washing of cars, watering the garden and cleaning the house.

Due to the recent rains, our dams and rivers are overflowing, but the heat associated with climate change is speeding up the rate of evaporation.

It is therefore crucial that the harvested rainwater is kept in closed containers to ensure that the water is not lost through evaporation in this hot weather.

We need to remember that South Africa is a water-scarce country and ranks among the 30 driest countries in the world.

Therefore, areas that experience large volumes of rainfall will benefit greatly from harvested rainfall.

Also, dry areas will be able to benefit from harvested rainwater if it is distributed to these areas.

Let us all hold hands as Team South Africa and harvest rainwater to ensure that we do not let this much-needed water run-off go to waste. This small act will increase our contribution towards water conservation efforts.

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