

YOUR SOIL IS A RESERVOIR

KEY POINTS

Soils are reservoirs of water for plants

Deep roots = access to more water

Maximising water entry into your soil

Using organic matter to increase the amount of water held in your soil

Most of the water that flows from our taps and showers comes from a reservoir that stores rainwater. Reservoirs are mainly lakes that have been created by placing a wall across a stream or river. The other main type of reservoir is a natural underground store called an aquifer, from which water is pumped via a borehole. This water too was once rain that percolated down through the soil.

Some facts about reservoirs are:

- The larger the reservoir, the longer will it be able to supply water, if it starts off full.
- The faster the rate of removal of water, the shorter the time until it runs dry.
- The higher the rainfall in the catchment area of a surface reservoir, the faster will be its filling.

The soil of your garden is a reservoir that stores water for your plants. It is filled by prolonged rain or irrigation. It is emptied mainly by plants, but also by losing water

through its leaky bottom and by evaporation from its surface. The length of time it can supply our plants depends on:

- **Its size.** Reservoir size increases as the depth of soil wetted by rain or irrigation water increases. But as far as our plants



Reservoirs hold water for our use.