

Why Rain Barrels?



- ◆ Rain barrels reduce stormwater runoff, especially polluted “first-flush” runoff
- ◆ Rain barrels save on water bills
- ◆ Rain barrels provide healthy , chemical-free water for irrigation of lawns, gardens, and trees
- ◆ Rain barrels can be connected to a rain garden, further improving our water quality
- ◆ Rain barrels can be an attractive, yet functional addition to the landscape

Rain Barrels - The Facts

A prolonged drought plagued the Hopkinsville area during 2007 causing the loss of many valuable landscaping plants and prompting water rationing. Water conservation and development of alternative water supplies is necessary to meet a growing demand for fresh water.

Rain barrels are an alternative water supply anyone can construct and use. Rain barrels capture, divert, and store rainwater for later use. Collected rainwater is often used in landscaping, because the water is free of salts and other harmful minerals. It can also be used to provide water for wildlife.



Large rain barrel

Installing rain barrels directly benefits our city by reducing demand on the water supply, and reducing run-off, erosion, and contamination of surface water.

In many communities, 30 to 50 percent of the total water is used for landscape irrigation. Capturing rainwater for use in the landscape makes efficient use of a valuable resource, reducing water bills and reducing demand on water supply.

Capturing rainwater using barrels can also help to prevent flooding and erosion, turning stormwater problems into water supply assets by slowing runoff and allowing it to soak into the ground. Reducing stormwater runoff helps reduce contamination of surface water with sediments, fertilizers, and pesticides.



Urban flooding



Oil spills



Sediment-laden runoff

Rain Barrels - Frequently Asked Questions

How large of a rain barrel do I need?

You may start with one small 55-gallon barrel. However, if your garden is sizable, contains vegetables, or you have lots of potted plants, you may use up the entire barrel in one good watering.



55-gallon rain barrel



Linked rain barrels

To increase the storage, link two or more barrels together in a stairstep fashion, or graduate up to a larger rain barrel. Linking barrels together or purchasing one large barrel eliminates cutting multiple downspouts. One 275-gallon barrel comes with a cage, a built-in vine support! Keep in mind neighborhood aesthetics and deed restrictions when purchasing and locating your rain barrel.



275-gallon rain barrel

How do I make my rain barrel?

You may use the materials list and the instructions provided, you may purchase a rain-barrel from a local or on-line source, or you may stay tuned for a future "make and take" rain barrel workshop.

How do I maintain my rain barrel?

Rain barrels need periodic cleaning, especially removal of debris deposited from the downspout. Translucent, unpainted barrels may need to have algae cleaned out occasionally. Also, to prevent freeze damage, barrels should be emptied, dried, and stored over-winter.

Can I paint my barrel?

Yes! Match your house, camouflage the barrel, or be creative.



Stormwater & Rain Barrels - Online Resources

Stormwater Runoff

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stormwater>

<http://www.hoptown.org/agencies/planning-commission/storm-water-management/>

<http://www.nrdc.org/water/pollution/fstorm.asp>

<http://www.epa.gov/weatherchannel/stormwater.html>

Rain Barrel Sources

www.rainbarrelguide.com

www.cleanaingardening.com

<http://www.aquabarrel.com/>

<http://www.midwestinternetsales.com/rainbarrels.htm>

<http://www.rainbarrelsource.com/>

Additional Rain Barrel Information

www.swfwmd.state.fl.us/publications/files/rain_barrels_guide.pdf

<http://www.dnr.state.md.us/ed/rainbarrel.html>

http://www.epa.gov/owow/nps/toolbox/other/KSMO_buildarainbarrel.pdf

<http://rainwaterharvesting.tamu.edu/>