

WHAT IS A RAIN BARREL?

A rain barrel is any type of container used to catch water flowing from a downspout. Rain barrels reduce the amount of stormwater runoff by collecting roof runoff and storing the rainwater for future use.

BENEFITS OF USING A RAIN BARREL

- Alternative to tap water for watering lawns and flower gardens.
- Reduction of peak volume and velocity of stormwater runoff reaching lakes and rivers.
- Helps reduce peak water demands during the summer months.

RESTRICTIONS ON RAIN BARREL USE

- Water collected from rain barrels is not suitable for human or pet consumption.
- Due to lack of research data, water collected in a rain barrel is *not* recommended for watering fruit or vegetable gardens.
- The water flow (and pressure) will be less than from your outdoor spigot, making sprinklers ineffective. Plan to use soaker hoses, hand-held spray nozzles and/or watering cans. Elevating your rain barrel on a sturdy platform will increase the flow.

HOW DO I MAINTAIN THE RAIN BARREL?

During the rainy months, routinely inspect your barrel. Remove any debris that has accumulated on the lid that might block the screen mesh. You should also routinely clean the inside of your rain barrel. During the winter months, remember to take your barrel out of operation. Turn it upside down or store it inside and redirect the downspout away from the foundation.

INTERESTING FACTS ABOUT RAIN BARRELS

- Rainwater can actually help improve the health of your gardens, lawn and trees. Rainwater is naturally “soft” and devoid of minerals, chlorine and other chemicals found in city water.
- During a one-inch rain event 0.6 gallons of water will fall on a square foot of roof and 54 gallons will fall on a 90 square feet of roof—enough to fill a 55 gallon rain barrel. To collect twice this volume from the same downspout, connect the overflow hose from the first rain barrel to a second rain barrel.
- A plastic rain barrel may be painted any color you wish. Use spray paint specially formulated to bond well to plastic surfaces.
- Rain barrels can be purchased at a cost between \$70-\$300. Or, you can reduce your costs considerably by making your own.

RECIPES FOR A CLEANER – GREENER TOMORROW

**RAIN
BARRELS**



**A Way You
Can Make A
Difference**

Watershed Action Team–Environmental Restoration

For more information on our environmental restoration effort, visit our website at <http://ccgovernment.carr.org/ccg/resmgmt/default.asp> or to volunteer for a cleaner, greener tomorrow e-mail us at ccwater@ccg.carr.org.