

## Build a (Rain) Barrel

Rain barrels are an inexpensive way to conserve water in your landscape. They are typically used in conjunction with your gutter system to capture rainwater from the roof and store it for later use. The stored rain water can be used to water lawns and flower gardens, clean tools, moisten compost, clean bird baths and fill ornamental ponds. This reduces the demand for municipally treated water and saves money on water bills.

Utilizing rain barrels also helps reduce the amount of rainfall runoff, or stormwater, leaving your property and entering the storm sewer system. This is important because stormwater runoff carries pollutants such as lawn chemicals, salts, and oils from yards, sidewalks, and driveways to our streams. Excessive runoff also causes soil erosion which introduces sediment into streams. All of these pollutants contribute to impaired water quality. As water quality in a stream degrades, habitat for aquatic life is threatened, availability for human recreation is diminished, and the cost of drinking water treatment increases.

Rain barrels can be purchased from home improvement or gardening supply stores or are easily constructed from used barrels and common hardware materials for about half the price. Contact your (county) agent to find out more about construction and use of rain barrels and other resources in your community.

Here are a few tips to get you started:

- Select a food-grade barrel, such as olive or pickle barrels, and rinse thoroughly prior to use. Non-food grade containers may have residual contaminants.
- Select a barrel that is dark in color or paint the barrel to limit sunlight exposure. This will inhibit algae growth.
- Select a location where the overflow can be directed away from your foundation.
- Situate your rain barrel on a solid, level base to prevent injuries. A full barrel may weigh 400 pounds or more.

Building a rain barrel makes a great weekend project. With proper care, your barrel will last for years. When using harvested water in your landscape, you will be doing your part for the environment by conserving water resources and reducing pollution to our waterways.

*\* Remember, water from your barrel is not potable and should not be used for personal washing, washing vegetables, or cooking.*

### Additional Resources:

HENV 201: Building a Rain Barrel.

<http://www2.ca.uky.edu/agcomm/pubs/henv/henv201/henv201.pdf>

You Tube Video: DIY Rain Barrel Build [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sKC8wJU\\_Uvo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sKC8wJU_Uvo)

Suggested Social Media Content:

Looking for a weekend project? Consider building and installing a rain barrel. Rain barrels are an inexpensive way to conserve water in your landscape. They capture rainwater from the roof and store it for later use. Harvested rainwater can be used to water your yard and flower beds or clean your lawn tools. This conserves drinking water and lowers your water bill. By capturing rainwater, you also reduce the amount of stormwater runoff entering our waterways.