



It's Time to Winterize!



Your rain barrel has worked hard for you over the spring and summer months. On average, it captured **700 gallons** of rainwater from your rooftop and stored it for later use. In some instances, the water was used to irrigate flower beds and gardens, in others it was used to clean garden tools. No matter how it was utilized, the rainwater captured and used in the landscape saved you money on your water bill. It also helped improve water quality in our streams by reducing the amount of rainwater entering the storm sewer system.

Reducing stormwater volume is an important part of improving water quality in our streams because high velocity and high-volume runoff accelerate streambank erosion. This introduces excess sediment into the stream which destroys aquatic habitats and harms wildlife. Eventually, erosion may lead to streambank instability and failure, causing flooding due to disruption of natural stream flow.

Your efforts to capture rainwater have played an important role in water conservation and protection of water quality. To protect your rain barrel from ice damage and prepare it for winter:

- Disconnect your rain barrel from the downspout.
- Extend the gutter and downspout to ensure water flows away from the foundation of your home.
- Drain all the water from the barrel and open all spigots.
- Store the barrel indoors or turn it upside down if left outdoors.

Contact your (county) agent to find out more about construction and use of rain barrels.

Resources:

HENV 201: Building a Rain Barrel

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

Suggested Social Media Content:

When putting your gardens to bed for the winter, take a few moments to perform some simple maintenance steps on your rain barrel. This will extend its life over many growing seasons.