

Rain Barrels Save...

About 40% of typical household water use is for lawns and gardens. Instead of paying for this water – on your utilities bill, or on the electric bill, you can capture the water from your roof, store it, and draw on it for your gardening needs. Rainwater is oxygenated, non-chlorinated, low in minerals, and warmer – better for plants and better for the environment. These are all reasons why you might want a rain barrel.

Why Rain Barrels?

- Store water away for an un-rainy day.
- Reduce your household water needs by saving rain.
- Water your garden naturally with untreated, air-temperature, non-chlorinated water.
- Provide water to areas that can't be reached by your hose.
- Collect and direct rain water away from the foundation of your house and to your garden.
- Stop storm water from polluting neighboring waters by keeping it where it falls.
- Recycling rain water reduces your personal energy consumption by using less treated water.
- Water your dry lawns and gardens during city-imposed watering bans.
- Reduce erosion and increase water quality.

Do I need a rain barrel?

The simple answer is no, nobody with access to municipal water *needs* a rain barrel. Instead, it is one of many choices we can make to have positive impact on an over-impacted environment. Choosing rain barrels is a great decision for conservation because it benefits you *and* the environment. While the positive impacts on your local surface water might be harder to see, you will be controlling the amount of polluted runoff from your own property. At the same time, you will gain a healthier, more natural garden without needlessly using municipal waters.

Rain Barrel Hydrology Lesson

Spring snowmelt and rains are usually plentiful. A rain gutter and extended downspout will help keep the water away from your house and minimize freeze thaw cycles that are dangerous for sidewalks and driveways. Because it is unlikely that your garden will be lacking in water at this time, the main spring-time function of rain barrels is to reduce the amount of storm water running off of your property.

Summer weather is more sporadic with unpredictable rainfall and hot dry spells. Rain barrels provide a way to balance watering needs during this time. Most storms deliver an ¼ inch of rain, but 5 to 6 times per year we get a 1-inch deluge. Because the typical residential roof can collect a significant amount of rainfall, the amount of water saved depends on the capacity of your rain barrel(s). If you want

to store water for irrigation between summer storms, you will need a rain barrel of adequate size. Connecting 2 to 3 barrels together or installing a barrel at more than one downspout is an easy way to multiply your storage capacity. To help plan your rain barrel set-up, consider the following:

1 inch of rain on 1 square foot of roof yields 0.6 gallons.

1 inch of rain onto a 10 ft x 10 ft area (100 sq. ft) yields 60 gallons.



Rainwater is considered a renewable natural resource. And while domestic potable water collection requires effort, energy, and chemicals for purification and transport, rainwater conserves natural resources, is free of chemicals, and is delivered without challenging the environment.

Please contact Karen at the Redwood Soil and Water Conservation District to order a rain barrel. Call (507) 637-2427 Ext. 3, email rainbarrels@redwoodswcd.org or see our website www.redwoodswcd.org.

