

RAIN BARRELS

Have you ever wondered how much water runs off your roof? During a typical moderate storm event of 1" of rain during a 24 hour period, over 700 gallons of water will run off the average roof, an impervious area of about 1,200 square feet. That same roof will shed over 30,000 gallons of water this winter. Add up hundreds of roofs in a city and we're talking a lot of water.

Your plants will love it! Rainwater has no added chemicals. Collect the soft rainwater your plants crave with a rain barrel. A rain barrel replenishes its water supply every time it rains. You'll capture the fresh water otherwise lost to runoff. An overflow port, located on the side of the barrel near the top, diverts excess rain to a garden or other distant area away from your home's foundation.

Conserve water. You can attach a solid brass faucet that is threaded so a garden hose can be attached directly to the barrel. An overflow hose can be used to connect barrels in a series for even more water capacity.

Learn about stormwater runoff. A rain barrel will show you the large amount of stormwater that is shed from impervious surfaces. Consider the cumulative impacts of stormwater runoff in a large drainage basin.

THE AVERAGE SIZED ROOF WILL SUPPLY ABOUT 4,000 GALLONS OF WATER FROM APRIL TO AUGUST.

Rain barrels do more than catch rainwater. While collecting water from the downspout these barrels also:

- Protect our rivers and streams from runoff pollution
- Provide oxygenated, unchlorinated water ideal for plants
- Control moisture levels around the foundation of your home.
- Divert water from the municipal storm drain system
- Conserve a vital natural resource
- Save you money

Tips for using your rain barrel are:

- Do not use collected water for drinking, cooking or bathing.
- Keep the lid secure so children or animals cannot fall into the barrel
- Disconnect the barrel during the winter months to avoid constant overflow during the rainiest months.
- Attach it in the early spring to fill it for use.
- Clean recycled barrels before first use.
- If a moss killer has been used on the roof, let a couple of rainfall events go by before collecting the roof runoff.
- Elevate your rain barrel slightly to make access to the spigot easier.
- Use a screened louver vent to prevent mosquitoes from breeding in your barrel.

Make your own rain barrel. For complete instructions to make your own rain barrel, contact the Ottawa County Drain Commissioner's Office at (616) 994-4530.