

Give your garden a treat ~ Rainwater from Rain Barrels will make your Garden SMILE!

# RAIN BARREL FACTS

## WHY HARVEST RAIN?...



Harvesting rainwater will save you money and help the environment at the same time. You can collect a substantial amount of rainwater with a simple system. This extra water can have a significant impact on your water bill.

Rain water is usually collected from the roofs of houses, it picks up very little contamination when it falls. That is, if you keep your roof clean of debris and potential contaminants to maximize purity. The material your roof is made of is also important in how much contamination the water will carry. The chemicals and hard water from many municipal water systems can produce an imbalance in the soil of your garden. Chemical fertilizers, fungicides, pesticides, and drought can also disrupt the balance and harmony of the soil. This imbalance causes trees and plants to weaken and makes them more susceptible to disease.

One of the best reasons to start harvesting rainwater with rain barrels is that if you teach and encourage others to do the same, you will help to spread the culture of rainwater collection and in turn help the larger community and the environment. It is always important to remember that every living thing on the planet needs water to survive!

### Stormwater Benefits

**Impervious Surface** - Those surfaces in the landscape that can not infiltrate rainfall, such as rooftops, pavement, sidewalks, driveways and compacted earth.

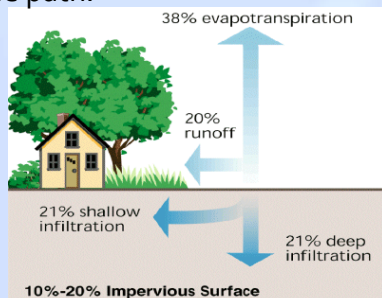
- ⊗ Rooftops, roads, parking lots, driveways, and even compacted soils are impervious surfaces. Rain barrels reduce runoff by collecting and storing rainwater from your roof.
- ⊗ In a pristine area, even an additional 10% of impervious surface alters the natural rainfall runoff pattern and has the potential to damage sensitive ecosystems.
- ⊗ Infiltration, allowing the water to soak into nearby soils, will recharge groundwater supplies by using a more natural water cycle path.

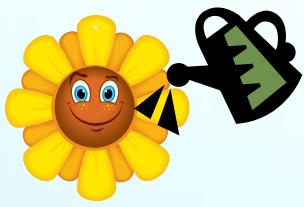
### Water Conservation Benefits

Your rain barrel will help conserve water supply resources.

- ⊗ Water usage increases in the summer by 30%. This is due to increases in outdoor water use such as lawn watering, flower and vegetable garden watering, car washing, and pavement cleaning.
- ⊗ Your water supply is unique to your location. Most rely upon rainfall to fill surface water reservoirs and underground aquifers, also known as groundwater.
- ⊗ By reducing the demand from established water supplies during dry summer months, you are helping the environment.
- ⊗ Rain barrels conserve water and lower costs (a rain barrel can save approximately 1,300 gallons of water during peak summer months).
- ⊗ Rain barrels reduce water pollutions by preventing storm water runoff which can contain pollutants like sediment, oil, grease, bacteria, and nutrients. Rainwater contains no chlorine, lime, or calcium.
- ⊗ Rainwater is an excellent source of "soft water" for homeowners.

### EXAMPLE: Impervious Surface





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## Managing Your Rain Barrel

### Water wise gardening with your rain barrel:

Rain patterns show regular rainfall events occur during April, May and June when vegetable gardens and perennial beds are being established. A water wise approach is to water annuals and perennials with rain barrel water and mulch heavily to retain moisture during the dryer months of July and August. However, don't despair, rain showers can occur in July and August to refill the barrel.

### Increase the capacity of rainwater storage:

You can connect more than one rain barrel together at each downspout. Raising the barrels off the ground by placing them on cement or wooden blocks will ease access to the faucet.

### Managing heavy rains:

It is essential to consider the impact of heavy winter rains on your drainage system. An overfull barrel has the potential to cause erosion around your home. Your rain barrel should always have an overflow spigot on the side, near the top.

### Overflow Management Options:

- 8 Connect a hose to an overflow spigot and direct the hose away from your foundation.
- 8 Disconnect the rain barrel from the downspout during winter and return the drainage system to its original configuration.
- 8 Leave the faucet open and set a splash block under it. Now the rain barrel is an extension of the downspout drainage system. Remember to close the faucet when you desire to fill the rain barrel.
- 8 Whatever the solution, design the overflow system to encourage infiltration of the water into the ground.



### **WARNING!**

***DO NOT use rain barrels for drinking, cooking or bathing. If moss killer has been used on the roof, let a few rain events bypass the barrel before collecting water.***



SO...

IT'S UP TO YOU...



**CATCH WATER  
FOR FLOWERS!  
MAKE YOUR  
GARDEN  
SMILE!**



For additional information on rain barrels and other water conservation ideas visit:

<http://www.wvca.us/wvwr/>