

RAIN BARRELS



Rain Barrels Defined

Rain barrels capture and store the rainwater running off your rooftop. The harvested rainwater can be stored for later use, released slowly over time to infiltrate properly, or used immediately for watering lawns and landscaped areas, filling ponds or fountains, or washing cars.

Rain barrels come in a variety of sizes and shapes to suit your tastes. (The rain barrels pictured above are the type provided by the RiverSmart Home program.) Improvements in their design eliminate the threat of basement flooding and also keep them from becoming breeding grounds for mosquitoes.

Rain barrel co-pay is \$30 per barrel. All *RiverSmart Homes* practices require co-payments, which permit \$1200 in landscaping that reduces stormwater runoff to help the District's streams and rivers.

Stormwater Runoff and the District of Columbia

Stormwater runoff is rainwater that flows off impervious surfaces such as rooftops, driveways, roads, sidewalks and sometimes even lawns. Stormwater runoff travels from these surfaces to our streams, picking up pollutants such as oil and grease from our roadways and driveways as it goes. Nutrients from lawn fertilizers and bacteria from pet waste may also be picked up by stormwater and carried to our streams.





Benefits of Rain Barrels

To the Homeowner....

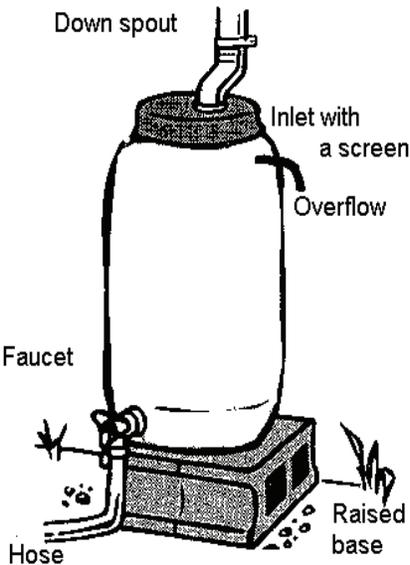
Rain barrels require little maintenance and—with the rising price of municipal water—are a great way to save money and conserve water as a natural resource. With a rain barrel you can:

- Cut your household use of water during the hot summer months
- Water your plants with chlorine-free rainwater that they prefer
- Clean your car, bike, tools, etc. without ever on the faucet
- Save money on water bills

To the District...

The District is promoting the use of rain barrels because they collect runoff from rooftops that runs directly into our streets and storm sewers, carrying it (and the pollutants it collects) directly to the local waterways. Rain barrels also:

- Decrease municipal water use, lowering demand for treated water – especially during periods of drought
- Increase soil moisture levels for gardens
- Assist in recharging the groundwater table when emptied after rain events
- Mitigate the threat of urban flooding when used on a large scale



Rain barrel attached to downspout.

How to Have a Rain Barrel

Rain barrels are connected to your downspout. They should be located in an easily accessible area and not too far from the intended use of the stored water (i.e. a garden).

To facilitate the flow of water, rain barrels should be placed on the highest level that is workable, or on a small stand. Rain barrels should have an overflow valve that directs water away from the foundation of your house.

Visit our website (ddoe.dc.gov/riversmarthomes) for readily available resources to assist you in finding and choosing a rain barrel.

Did you know?

The 34,300 gallons of rain water that falls on an average roof per year could potentially be harvested to water the typical lawn 45 times.



Want to have a rain barrel in your yard? *RiverSmart Homes* can help.

The District Department of the Environment (DDOE) RiverSmart Homes District-wide program offers incentives to homeowners interested in reducing stormwater pollution from their properties.

Rain barrels are one of the environmentally friendly landscaping practices available through this program.

Find more information about *RiverSmart Homes* and Rain Barrels at: ddoe.dc.gov/riversmarthomes or call 202-535-2240