



# Licking County Soil & Water Conservation District



**Our Mission: To promote conservation of natural resources through local leadership, education and assistance.**

## R A I N B A R R E L S

### Rain Barrels

#### What is a rain barrel?

A rain barrel is an above-ground cistern or container that harvests and stores water, which can be used when needed. The rain barrel attaches to a gutter downspout enabling it to catch rain water from a roof. The collected rain water can be used to water plants. Rain barrels come in different sizes as well as a variety of colors to match just about any home color scheme.

#### Rain barrels are a unique way to help the environment!

**Reduction of water run-off:** When it rains, roof water travels down gutters and often runs off lawns faster than it can infiltrate the soil. In many cases, downspouts drain directly into the street. Utilizing a rain barrel will allow the water to be stored for later use, rather than letting the water runoff the property.

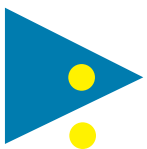
**Water conservation:** Rainfall patterns are quite variable and often inconsistent in different areas of the country. During below normal rainfall periods, some communities have imposed water use restrictions (e.g. watering lawns and gardens, washing cars, etc.). A rain barrel, or a system of rain barrels, can provide the homeowner with a non-potable water source during dry spells.

**Water Supply during a drought:** When the weather turns dry, 55 gallons of stored water will go a long way into saving a newly planted tree or small garden.

#### Tips for Using Rain Barrels:

- \* Do not use collected water for drinking, cooking or bathing!
- \* Keep the screen on the rain barrel.
- \* Keep the screened opening free of leaves and debris. Mosquitoes will not be able to escape.
- \* Keep the lid secure to restrict young children and animals from getting into the barrel.
- \* Disconnect and drain the barrel during winter months to avoid freezing and cracking the barrel.
- \* For additional capacity, connect multiple barrels.
- \* Elevate the rain barrel for easier spigot access and to increase water pressure.





**Quick Fact:**

A one-fourth inch rainfall harvested from a 500 square foot roof area, directed through a rain barrel, will supply enough water to irrigate a 10 foot x 12.5 foot garden with 1 inch of water per square foot.

**What Size Rain Barrel Do I Need?**

If you are just starting out and want a simple system, we recommend using one 55-gallon barrel. Additional barrels can be added depending on the size of garden or yard, or other intended uses.

**Determining Your Watering Needs:**

To determine how much water you will need, measure the area of your garden (length x width) times the amount of water desired (in inches) x 0.6\*. This number equals the number of gallons that need to be collected. \* 1 square foot area x 1" rain = approximately 0.6 gallons)

**Example:**

Garden area that is 350 sq. ft (10' x 35') x .25" (desired amount of water) x 0.6 = 52.5 gallon required for each watering.

**Determining the Yield of Water from Your Roof:**

To determine the amount of water from your roof, multiply the roof area (length x width) x amount of rain water (rain event in inches) x 0.6. This number equals the number of gallons that will drain from your roof.

**Example:**

A roof area of 24' x 20' (480 square feet) x 0.25" (rainfall) x 0.6 will yield 72 gallons of water.

**How to Handle the overflow:**

Your rain barrel needs to be equipped with an over-flow system that will direct extra water away from your foundation and into a grassy swale or rain garden.

**For more information, contact:**



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