

## Rain Barrels Can Help Save the World

We moved to a new house this year and finally have a yard that has enough plants and bushes that we actually have to water from time to time. Most of our neighbors have the same philosophy that we do about the grass. No one really waters, since the grass will easily grow back after a dry spell. The plants and bushes are another story. We have had an inordinate amount of rain this year. In between those really wet weeks, though, there were really hot weeks. My kids often left their sand buckets outside and they would be full after it rained. I wished I had a bigger version of that, so I could utilize the excessive amounts of water that went unused after those huge rainstorms. It was time for some rain barrels.

I read a shocking statistic once that an estimated 40 percent of household water in the summer months is used to water gardens and lawns. Capturing rain water with a system of rain barrels can decrease the demand on our municipal water supplies significantly. The Maryland Environmental Design Program believes rain barrels could allow a consumer to save about 1,300 gallons of water during peak water usage months. Water is already scarce in many places. It should not be squandered. City sewer infrastructures are more frequently overflowing during downpours, due to population increases. Rain barrels can decrease the demand on those systems. Rain water is also free. The most inexpensive way to keep your yard green is by using rain barrels to capture rain water. Having a stash of water in rain barrels also allows you to water at your leisure, if your city has any water restriction times. Municipal water contains chlorine, which is not so good for our soil or environment. Rain water is chlorine free.

Rain barrels attach to your gutters and downspouts and store the water for future use. Rain barrels come in all shapes and sizes with a wide price range. There are basic plastic barrels, or a fancy pottery barrels that will dazzle your neighbors. I recommend child proofing your rain barrels, which means making sure all barrels have a secure top or are too narrow for a child to get inside. Many barrel intakes can be fitted with a filter to help keep mosquitoes at bay. Rain barrels with overflow hoses and a spout are also very handy.

If you are a homeowner, get some rain barrels. Even if you do not own your home, get your landlord on board and offer to install a barrel yourself. Help your bottom line and the world by installing some rain barrels. I am embarrassed that my environmentally conscious household waited so long to do it.

### About the Author

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