

Overall, Rain Barrels improve the water quality in the environment, benefit owners by implementing cost-effective collection of water for gardens and lawns, and can be an added touch of decoration on one's property.



For more information on rain barrels, contact the following:

- **The Environmental Protective Agency**
<http://www.epa.gov/reg3esd1/garden/rainbarrel.html>
(215) 814-3215
- **Department of Environmental Protection**
Chapter 6.5.2 BMP Runoff Capture and Reuse
<http://www.elibrary.dep.state.pa.us/dsweb/View/Collection-8305>
(814) 472-1900
- **Your Local Municipality**



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RAIN BARRELS



The Public's Guide to Rain Barrels

- **Why rain barrels?**
- **How do they work?**
- **Do they require a lot of effort to maintain?**

Why Rain Barrels?



Stormwater is the water created during events of precipitation.

Water that is not saturated into the ground because of runoff then flows into either

the storm systems or overflows into sewage systems. Runoff can pick up pollutants that are harmful to the public and the environment.

By working to reduce stormwater, the negative impact stormwater causes can also be reduced. Rain barrels (See **Figure 1—Rain water discharging into rain barrel**) enable the reduction of runoff from overflowing sewage, decrease the amount of pollutants (such as litter, pet waste, road salt, and other pollutants) picked up by runoff, and prevent stream bank erosion.

An added benefit is a decrease in your water bill by using free collected water for a lawn or garden.

How do they work?

Rain barrels are large containers that collect the rain water from roofs (See **Figure 2—The Components of a Rain Barrel**).

Once the water is collected from the roof through the downspout, it can be directed to a permeable area.

Permeable areas include gardens, lawns, or planted areas, which allow the excess water to be soaked in to the ground.

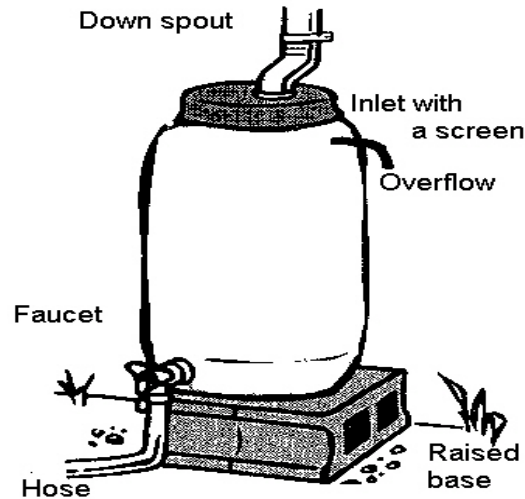


Figure 2—The components of a rain barrel.

Do they require a lot of effort to maintain?

Rain barrels require little effort to maintain. Simple steps such as keeping the lid on tight, keeping the faucet open, removing debris from the inside of the barrel, and directing the water to proper permeable areas ensure a functional rain barrel.

To improve the appearance of the rain barrel, several actions can be implemented (See **Figure 3—Decorative Rain Barrels**):

- Cover the barrel with plants or vines
- Paint the barrel to desired appearance
- Locate the barrel in an area where other objects will provide cover



Figure 3—Decorative Rain Barrels

