

## Rain barrel tips

- Place your rain barrel on a raised level surface for easy use of the stored water.
- Cover your rain barrel with a screen or lid. This will prevent debris from accumulating in the rain barrel and clogging it. The screen or lid will also prevent mosquitoes from using the rain barrel as a breeding location.
- The water collected in a rain barrel should not be used for drinking, bathing, or for watering vegetables or other edible plants. Contaminants from the roof can taint the harvested water.
- Make sure the overflow is directed away from your foundation. Rain barrels can fill up quickly during big storms!
- Multiple barrels can be joined together for additional water storage.
- Disconnect and empty your rain barrel in the winter, and store it upside down to keep it clean and prevent ice damage.
- Consider painting your rain barrel to personalize it, or so it will fit in better with the landscape or architecture.



## Where can I get a rain barrel?

Rain barrels can be purchased through community distribution programs, usually at a discount, or from retailers. The City of Middletown has sponsored several distributions in partnership with The Great American Rain Barrel Company (for information contact the Public Works Department, 860-344-3526). Community programs such as the Middletown distribution are posted on the company's website, ([www.greatamericanrainbarrel.com](http://www.greatamericanrainbarrel.com)).

Local retailers that stock rain barrels include Ace Hardware, Target, Home Depot or Lowe's. You can also purchase rain barrels from on-line sources like Gaiam, Plow & Hearth, Rain Barrel Source, and The Great American Rain Barrel Company.

Or, you can try making your own rain barrel! Look for directions on the internet (for example, at [www.naturallrainwater.com](http://www.naturallrainwater.com)).

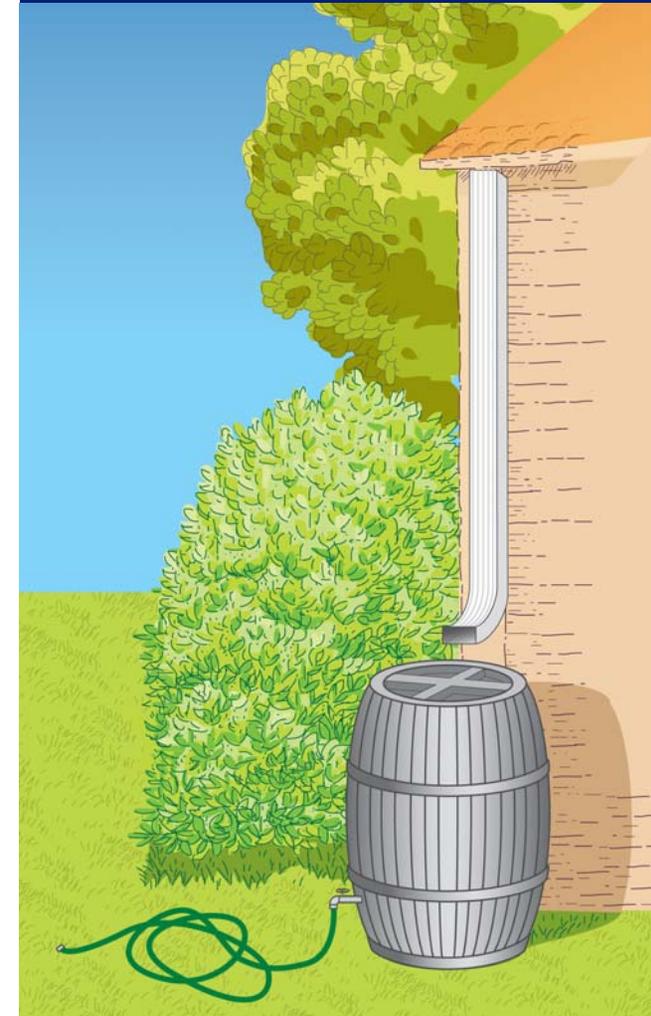


Produced by the Connecticut River Coastal Conservation District in collaboration with the Middletown Public Works Department. Funded in part by a generous grant from The Rockfall Foundation, Middletown, CT.



Cover graphic courtesy of King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks, WA

# Rain Recycling with Rain Barrels



 **Connecticut River Coastal Conservation District, Inc.**

deKoven House Community Center  
27 Washington Street  
Middletown, CT 06457

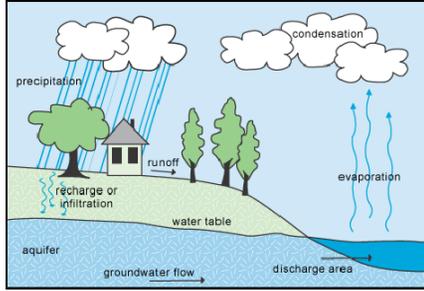
Phone: 860-346-3282

Fax: 860-346-3284

[www.conservect.org/ctrivercoastal](http://www.conservect.org/ctrivercoastal)

## Where does the rain go?

The earth has a limited amount of water that falls as rain, travels overland or under the ground to water bodies such as rivers, lakes and oceans, and gets back into the air through evaporation. This process is called the water cycle.



The fate of falling rain is different in natural and urban areas. When rain falls in undeveloped areas, most of the water soaks into the ground. Natural vegetation such as trees, shrubs and tall grasses

slows the flow of rainwater and filters pollutants.

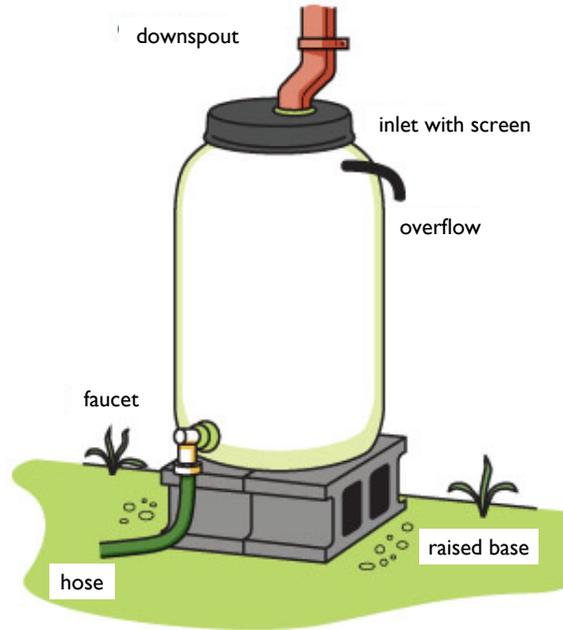
In developed areas most of the natural vegetation is gone. When rain falls it hits hard surfaces like roads and roofs, and then runs off quickly downhill. This runoff can cause flooding and pollution. The excess water picks up pollutants from parking lots, streets, and lawns, and carries them into streams, rivers, lakes and oceans.



North Carolina DENR

## What is a rain barrel?

A rain barrel is a container that collects and stores rainwater from rooftops, gutters and downspouts. This stored water can be used for watering gardens and lawns, washing cars and windows, and for other outdoor uses.



Rain barrels are designed to be placed under a roof's downspout to collect rainwater. Typically, they have a mesh covered opening on top so water can get in, a spigot on the bottom to allow use of the water, and an overflow valve. The barrels are oftentimes made from recycled food-grade plastic containers. They are usually installed on a raised platform to improve water pressure.

While used most commonly by homeowners, rain barrels can also be used on commercial properties.

## What are rain barrel benefits?

Rain barrels are inexpensive, easy to install and maintain, and provide many cost savings and environmental benefits.

- Rain barrels provide a free supply of fresh water. The water is naturally soft, oxygenated and without minerals, chlorine, lime, calcium and other chemicals.
- Rain barrels save money and energy by cutting back on tap water use. A rain barrel can save about 1300 gallons of water during the summer months.
- Rain barrels help keep our streams, rivers, lakes and oceans clean by reducing runoff that can contain pollutants like oil, sediment, bacteria, pesticides and fertilizers.
- Rain barrels can reduce erosion and flooding on your property. They can also help curb flooding in developed areas by reducing the amount of water leaving your property.

