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County Executive



**Department of
Environmental
Resources**

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Director

Rain Barrels Fact Sheet

What are rain barrels?



Rain barrels are containers used to collect a portion of the rainwater that flows from your rooftop and store it for uses such as watering your lawn and garden. Rain barrels are not for storing drinking water or water for use inside your home. By capturing water from downspouts that would otherwise discharge onto a paved surface, rain barrels can reduce the amount of runoff and pollutants reaching local streams. Typical components of a rain barrel include a hose connection at the outlet, a screen trap to filter out downspout debris at the inlet, and an overflow outlet. A range of materials, designs, and colors are available.



What are the benefits to property owners and communities?

- ▶ Provides a free water source for gardens, lawns, and car washing.
- ▶ Collected water can be used any time, even during periods of city- or county-imposed water restrictions.
- ▶ Since rainwater is soft, oxygenated, devoid of chlorine and other chemicals it can help improve the health of your garden, lawn, and trees.
- ▶ Rain barrels can reduce the amount of stormwater runoff, allowing more of the water to soak into the ground, replenishing groundwater.

How can you determine if your property is suitable for rain barrels?

Rain barrels are a good option for homes and buildings with:

- ▶ Downspouts that discharge onto driveways, sidewalks, and other paved surfaces, or steep slopes.
- ▶ Lawn, garden, or other landscaping that requires frequent watering.

You can install multiple rain barrels, in series, to a single downspout. You can also connect a single rain barrel to several leaders draining different portions of your roof.

Qualifying for a Rebate

Project	Individual Residence OR Individual Members of a Housing Cooperative	Commercial, Multi-Family Dwelling, Nonprofit, Not-for-Profit Organizations, Housing Cooperatives
Rain Barrels	\$50 (must capture 100 gallons)	\$100 (must capture 200 gallons)

Because most rain barrels hold 55 gallons of water at full capacity, in most cases more than one rain barrel will be required to qualify for a rebate.

What are the costs?

Rain barrels are relatively inexpensive, ranging from less than \$50 to as much as \$250, depending on whether you create your own or buy a commercially made barrel.

Can you do this project yourself?

Yes. You are not required to hire a contractor, and no special skills are involved. You can build your own rain barrel or purchase a pre-assembled rain barrel and install it yourself. Rain barrels are sold at most major hardware stores. Build your own rain barrel instructions are available from many sources, such as *A Homeowner's Guide to Stormwater Management*, published by the Office of Watersheds, Philadelphia Water Department, *How to Build and Install a Rain Barrel*, published by the Center for Watershed Protection, and *Building a Rain Barrel*, published by the Maryland Department of the Environment.

For more information, call 311 or contact us at DERRebatesandCredits@co.pg.md.us.

