

What You Can Do: Collect Rainwater

According to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), between 30 and 70 percent of all household water is devoted to outdoor uses <<http://www.epa.gov/watersense>>.

An easy way to save water for outdoor use is to collect rainwater, which is naturally occurring and free to use. Rain barrels, or systems that collect rainwater, are relatively inexpensive to construct and offer a convenient way to catch precipitation. Captured rainwater, rather than potable water, can then be used for outside chores.

Making Your Own

While commercially-produced rain barrels are available for purchase, making your own is a good alternative. Most designs require a 55-gallon drum, a drill, a piece of window screen, a faucet, and an available downspout. To collect even more water, multiple barrels can be connected by a hose to fashion a “daisy chain.”

After collection, what is rainwater used for? Water collected in rain barrels is normally set aside for outdoor use, because it is not filtered and may contain chemicals, bacteria, or other contaminants. This water is perfect for:

- Watering lawns, gardens, and house plants
- Washing windows
- Washing vehicles
- Saving money by reducing household demand for water
- Conserving fresh drinking water
- Providing a source of outdoor water in times of drought



Picture from <http://www.floridata.com>

For more information about rain barrels and to find out how to make your own, visit:

- <http://greenbuildingelements.com/rainbarrel101.shtml>
- <http://www.harvesth2o.com>
- <http://www.hgtv.com/landscaping/rainbarrels>
- <http://www.epa.gov/Region3/p2/what-is-rainbarrel.pdf>