

What does a rain barrel do?

A rain barrel collects and stores rainwater from your roof by diverting runoff from the downspout of your gutter system. Using a rain barrel can help the average homeowner save about 1,300 gallons of water during peak summer months.



What are the benefits of rain barrels?

Rain barrels offer many important benefits, including:

- **Saving money** by reducing the amount of water you use
- Offering a **free source of clean water** for a number of outdoor uses, such as watering plants and gardens, washing cars, etc.
- **Reducing the amount of stormwater that enters the sewer system** during rainstorms, which can help prevent sewage overflows into homes and local waterways
- Providing an **extra source of water** in times of drought
- **Reducing pollution** of local waterways caused by urban runoff

Installation: Installing a rain barrel is a quick and easy process. To start capturing rainwater, all you need is a barrel, diverter or downspout elbow, about an hour of your time and a few tools you probably already own. To get started:

1. Locate a downspout from which to collect rain



Before

2. Place leveled cinder blocks where your rain barrel will sit. The blocks should be tall enough for a watering can to fit below the spigot



3. Determine a location to cut the existing downspout and cut with hacksaw



4. Attach a flexible diverter or downspout elbow from the existing downspout to the top of the rain barrel



5. Place the rain barrel on the center of blocks; you're now ready to harvest rainwater!



After

Photos: Ward Wilson via Picasa, Creative Commons Attribution

Maintaining your rain barrel: Like most things around your home, your rain barrel needs a little attention to keep working properly. Following these tips will ensure that your rain barrel will provide you many years of reliable service:

Regular Maintenance:

- Empty your rain barrel once a month
- Clean the rain barrel's interior once a year with a nontoxic cleaner & rinse completely
- Clean gutters regularly to minimize debris collected in rain barrel

Seasonal Maintenance:

- Disconnect the downspout & return it to its configuration prior to the barrel's installation
- Remove and store hose
- Drain rain barrel completely to prevent freezing & cracking & store upside-down





When it rains, stormwater enters the sewer system both through direct connections, such as downspouts, as well as through cracks in the pipes, some of which are more than 100 years old. This allows stormwater to mix with raw sewage, exceeding the pipes' capacity. During major rain storms, this mix of stormwater and raw sewage can then back up into residents' basements, overflow into neighborhood streets and spill out into local rivers and streams.

In response to these serious problems, The Metropolitan District launched the Clean Water Project, which is the MDC's sanitary sewer infrastructure improvement initiative. Reducing excess stormwater flow from the sewer system is one of the key components of this project.

In parallel with the MDC's effort, the City of Hartford's Office of Sustainability also hosted a Retain the Rain pilot program, which focused on helping Hartford residents save money and help the environment at the same time. Together, the MDC and the Hartford Office of Sustainability are collaborating to bring free rain barrels to Hartford residents. By collecting stormwater that would otherwise enter the sewer system and be unnecessarily treated, rain barrels are one smart, green way to help manage stormwater in our communities.



Where can I get a rain barrel for my house?

Hartford residents can get a free rain barrel through the Retain the Rain program. The only requirement is Hartford residency.

For more information, visit:
hartfordclimate.org/retaintherain

or Contact:
 Grace Yi, Green Infrastructure Assistant
 Email: grace.yi@hartford.gov
 Office: (860) 757-9739

About the Climate Stewardship Initiative

The Climate Stewardship Initiative (CSI) is an inclusive, community-wide effort led by Mayor Luke Bronin (through the Office of Sustainability) and the Climate Stewardship Council. The CSI aims to advance the city's economy, improve public health, and promote equity through environmental stewardship.

About the Metropolitan District

Founded in 1929, The Metropolitan District (MDC) manages the water and sewer systems for several municipalities in the greater Hartford area. The MDC provides its customers with safe, pure drinking water and other invaluable services. For more information about the MDC please visit www.themdc.org.



Rain Barrels



Recycle Water

Save Money

Reduce Pollution

