

# Rain Barrels

save money and conserve water!



## Why Use a Rain Barrel?

- Rain water is FREE! You are saving money and conserving water by using rainwater collected from your roof to water your trees and garden.
- Collecting water reduces runoff, which reduces the nutrients and sediments that are found in local rivers and streams.
- Use your rain barrel in areas where you may not have a spigot.
- Connecting your barrel to a soaker hose works well for watering plants with shallow root systems.
- Using a rain barrel is a great way to decrease your impact on waterways and to become a good steward of the natural resources we all share.

## Diversion of Water from the Wastewater Treatment Plant:

In older urban areas where storm sewers and sanitary sewers are combined, the disconnection of downspouts can be enhanced by the use of a rain barrel. Collect rain water that would have otherwise been unnecessarily treated. A rain barrel won't solve the combined sewer overflow problem, but it will help!

## Helpful Hints :

- Do not use collected water for drinking, cooking or bathing.
- Elevate your rain barrel slightly to make access to the spigot easier.
- Keep the lid secure so children or animals cannot fall into the barrel.
- A mesh screen will prevent mosquitoes from breeding in your barrel. For added protection try a mosquito dunk that will kill mosquito eggs but is non-toxic to plants and animals.
- If a moss killer has been used, on the roof let a few rainfall events pass before collecting runoff.
- When using the overflow, make sure water drains away from structures, pavement, sidewalks and neighboring properties.
- Paint or decorate your barrel to make it an interesting and distinct part of your garden!

☾ SLOW IT DOWN, SPREAD IT OUT, SOAK IT IN. ☽

## You can make a difference!

We all have a role in preserving our Great Lakes—our actions on the land impact the water quality in Lake Erie. By installing a rain barrel at your home, you can save n=money, have a positive impact on our environment, and improve the health of our local waterways.

Collect water for a sunny day!

**Average annual rainfall in Defiance is approximately 36 inches.**

**On the average, 10 inches of snow equals 1 inch of rain when melted.**



**1 inch of rain on a 1,000 square foot roof yields approximately 623 gallons of water.**

**Defiance**  
419-782-1794  
Soil & Water Conservation District

  
**DEFIANCE**  
*a great place to live*

City of Defiance, MS4 Coordinator  
**419.783.4355**

# Basic Rain Barrel Maintenance



## Clean:

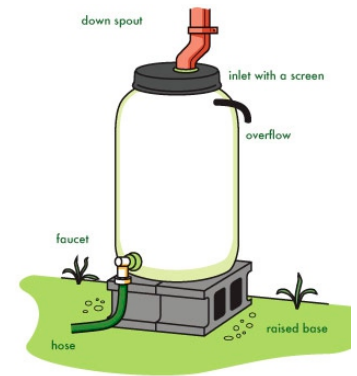
Before using your rain barrel for the first time, give it a good cleaning with any non-toxic substance like vinegar. Rinse the barrel completely so that none of the cleaner remains.

Rain barrels typically come with screen tops to catch debris that flow through the downspout, and keep out mosquito larva. This should be cleaned regularly as roof debris accumulates.

Ideally, you should completely empty your rain barrel monthly and rinse it out. If any algae growth is present, add a cap full of chlorine bleach to stem that growth. Such a small amount of bleach will not be detrimental to your plants.

## Expand Your Collection:

Rain barrels only collect a relatively small amount of water compared to the runoff from a roof during heavy storms or prolonged rain events. To handle larger volumes of water, rain barrels are best used with complementary water management practices such as rain gardens. This works well if you have your rain barrel's overflow connections setup to run into an adjacent rain garden. It also works well to have multiple barrels connected together to store larger volumes of water during the rainy season for use in the dry season.



## Connecting:

When linking two barrels together, remember that gravity flow will transfer water from a full barrel to an empty barrel. The feeder barrel should be up on blocks or bricks to make it slightly higher, and allow gravity to drain water from the feeder barrel to the collector barrel.

## Winterize:

To prolong the life of your rain barrel, it is necessary to winterize them anywhere the temperature regularly drops below freezing. If water remains in the rain barrel during these periods of cold, it will freeze, expand, and crack. The best way to protect your rain barrel from the elements is to disconnect it during the winter months and put it inside whenever possible!

- Disconnect the downspout from the rain barrel prior to the first hard freeze.
- Return the downspout to original setup or extend away from building foundations.
- Drain the rain barrel.
- Move the rain barrel, hoses and mesh screens inside into a garage or basement

If you don't have a place to store your barrel inside, you can drain the barrel and turn it upside down or leave it hooked up with the spigots open to ensure that no water will be able to accumulate inside.



**Adding a rain barrel to your home garden is one way you can make a difference and help protect our lakes and rivers.**

