



# RAIN BARRELS

A Guide For Geauga County Landowners

## What is a Rain Barrel?

A rain barrel is a container used to collect and store rainwater from your roof that would otherwise be lost to runoff and diverted to a storm drain or out onto your property. The water in the rain barrel can then be used for watering your landscape.

## Why Use a Rain Barrel?

Rain barrels work day in and day out to keep rainwater out of storm drains, sewers, and ditches.

Why is this important? Every time it rains, unabsorbed water rushes into storm drains and directly into our local waterways. Often times this runoff carries with it pollutants it has picked up along the way. This type of pollution that results from storm water runoff is called nonpoint source pollution. Nonpoint source pollution is the leading cause of water pollution in the United States and the most common pollutants originate in our own backyards! They include pesticides, fertilizers, pet waste, and automotive fluids. Rain barrels are a practical way to control excess storm water and reduce the negative effects of pollution. Best of all, having a rain barrel conserves our most precious resource...water.

## Reaping the Benefits

Believe it or not, for every inch of rain that falls on a catchment area of 1,000 square feet, you can expect to collect approximately 600 gallons of rainwater.

Ten inches of rainwater falling on a 1,000 square foot catchment area will generate about 6,000 gallons of rainwater! Imagine if everyone used a rain barrel. How much could we lower water costs, alleviate flooding, recharge groundwater, and reduce storm water runoff?





**Using a Rain Barrel Helps to:**

Decrease nonpoint source pollution  
Prevent erosion and control sediment  
Conserve water and save money  
Alleviate flooding  
Provide mineral-rich water for plants and gardens  
Improve surface and ground water quality

**Rain Barrels for Sale!**

Geauga SWCD also sells unpainted rain barrels throughout the year. These 50 gallon barrels are made from recycled polypropylene food grade barrels and have a spigot for easy watering.

Barrels come with a screw-on lid as well as a screen to deter mosquitos from laying their eggs in the water. Each barrel weighs approximately 18 pounds and measures 42 inches high and 24 inches in diameter. Barrels cost 106.75 (\$100 + tax) and can be picked up at the Geauga SWCD office at 12611 Ravenwood Drive, Suite 240, Chardon, Ohio 44024.

**Getting Started...Some Rain Barrel Reminders**

Because there are many different ways to set up a rain barrel, we recommend doing research first so you can decide the best way to install your barrel to most effectively meet your needs. Below are some helpful tips to get you started.

1. Be sure to create a level and secure foundation for your rain barrel. Raising the barrel on flat paver stones or cinder blocks creates more water pressure for your garden hose or soaker hose and better access for a watering can.
2. Direct your downspout into the top of the barrel, either through the screen provided or cut a hole into the plastic lid so rainwater can enter the barrel. Creating a "closed system" with a screen or lid will prevent mosquito larvae from developing.
3. Make a plan for handling excess rainwater by either installing a downspout diverter (which will divert surplus water back into your downspout) or an overflow valve.
4. Several options for an overflow valve include connecting to a garden hose, another rain barrel, or a hose which drains to your yard.

**Rain Barrel Yard Art**

Since 2006, Geauga SWCD has sponsored its annual Rain Barrel Yard art Campaign. Through this campaign, the District loans barrels to local artists who donate their time, talent, and paint to transform these recycled rain barrels into functional yard art. In August through October of each year, the decorated rain barrels are placed on display and available for purchase through a silent auction. The ever-popular annual painted rain barrel silent auction showcases talented artists, promotes water conservation through rain barrels, and raises money for the Districts community environmental education initiatives.

**Lawns and garden watering make up nearly 40% of total household water use during the summer...**



**RAIN BARREL ORDERS CAN BE PLACED BY  
CALLING 440-834-1122 OR VISITING  
GEAUGASWCD.COM!**