

City of Ocala Utility Services Department Water Conservation Project

Rain Barrel Fact Sheet

A rain barrel is rainwater harvesting system that collects and stores rainwater from your roof. Stored water may be used for gardening purposes.

Why use a Rain Barrel?

- A rain barrel can help **reduce water consumption**, thereby saving energy and money.
- Rain Barrels help to **reduce pollution** by capturing and reusing water that would otherwise be storm water runoff that can pick up pollutants such as motor oil, gasoline, trash, dirt, fertilizer, animal waste and other contaminants that may flow directly into a natural waterway.
- A rain barrel allows you to manage where and when the rainwater is released, therefore **preventing erosion and flooding** during heavy rain and permitting watering with stored water during a dry spell.



Supplies Required: (Available from local hardware stores)

- ✓ Garden hose or soaker hose
- ✓ One 15' section of garden hose
- ✓ One 5' flexible downspout diverter
- ✓ Two concrete cinder blocks

*Your new rain barrel has been fitted with a hose spigot near the bottom, an overflow adapter near the top, and a mesh-covered intake on the top of the barrel. The barrels we sell are all **reused**, and the water should be used for watering lawns and gardens only.*

This water is not to be used for drinking water.

Tips

- In order to increase the output water pressure and provide for easier use of the spigot located near the bottom of the barrel, place barrel on the 2 cinder blocks. Secure a garden hose or soaker hose to the spigot and close the spigot until you are ready to water your garden. You may also use your rain barrel to fill watering cans, fountains, etc.
- You will want to place your rain barrel to catch rain from a gutter downspout. You can modify your downspout by cutting it with a hacksaw approximately 12" above the top of the barrel. The downspout does not get physically connected to the barrel. Use the flexible downspout diverter to divert the water into the opening on the top of the barrel.
- Secure a 15' garden hose to the upper overflow adapter allowing you to divert excess water away from your house.
- Keep an eye on the weather report and drain the barrel ahead of time if a storm is forecast. If your rain barrel fills up too quickly you may consider adding a 2nd rain barrel.
- You should either empty the water from the barrel or store your barrel in the garage or shed during winter months. Freezing water will expand and could damage your rain barrel. Save the cut section of your downspout and reinstall original gutter configuration should you need to store your barrel.
- Paint away! Get creative! Barrels may be painted to blend with the color of your home. Krylon Fusion Paint is recommended. Stickers are another way to personalize your barrel.
- It is a good idea to periodically clear the top of the barrel of debris such as leaves and inspect that the screen is intact.

For more information, please contact the City of Ocala Utility Services Department at (352) 351-6608