

## How to decorate your rain barrel!

Make decorating your rain barrel a family or group project. It's fun and easy!

- ◆ To paint a rain barrel a solid color, Krylon's Fusion spray paints are recommended as they are designed for plastic and do not require a primer.
- ◆ To paint designs, first prime the barrel with Zinser 1-2-3 (blue can) and follow with a coat of interior/exterior grade acrylic paint. Finally, paint your designs with acrylics.
- ◆ Display proudly and share your idea with neighbors and friends.



## How can the rainwater be used?

Consider these ideas for your mineral-rich, chlorine-free rainwater:

- ◆ Attach regular or soaker hoses to the bottom spigot and top overflow valve and direct to landscaped areas nearby.
- ◆ Fill a bucket to hand-water plants in your garden and indoor plants.
- ◆ Use for pet-care, from filling animal water bowls, to using for pet baths.
- ◆ Use the rain water to wash cars and bicycles.

## How can rain barrels be purchased?

- ◆ Rain barrels are available for \$85. Stands are \$20.
- ◆ Payment is accepted in cash, by check or credit card (Visa, Master Card, American Express).
- ◆ The barrels can be purchased at The Conservation Foundation's McDonald Farm in Naperville on Thursdays between 2 – 4 p.m. They can also be purchased by special arrangement in Naperville or at the organization's Dickson-Murst Farm in Montgomery.
- ◆ For more information, contact Jim Kleinwachter, The Conservation Foundation's Land Protection Specialist, by email at [jkleinwachter@theconservationfoundation.org](mailto:jkleinwachter@theconservationfoundation.org) or by phone at 630-553-0687, Ext. 302.



Rain Barrels are just one element of The Conservation Foundation's Conservation@Home education and recognition program for homeowners. Criteria for certification includes:

- ◆ Landscaping featuring native plants, initiatives to control invasive plant species.
- ◆ Protection and creation of natural areas.
- ◆ Efforts to reduce erosion and pollutants along rivers and streams on property.

Certified homeowners will receive:

- ◆ Comprehensive yard assessment including ideas to improve environmental friendliness of property.
- ◆ A Conservation@Home signpost to display in your yard.
- ◆ One year complimentary membership to The Conservation Foundation.
- ◆ Subscriptions to The Conservation Foundation quarterly magazine as well as the Conservation@Home newsletter.

For more information, please contact The Conservation Foundation.

Help Preserve Our Precious Resources!



# Rain Barrels

*A great addition to every home*



## The Conservation Foundation

Headquarters: McDonald Farm  
10S404 Knoch Knolls Road  
Naperville, IL 60565  
630-428-4500

Program Office: Dickson-Murst Farm  
2550 Dickson Road  
Montgomery, IL 60538  
630-553-0687

[www.theconservationfoundation.org](http://www.theconservationfoundation.org)

## What are rain barrels?

A rain barrel is a water tank which is used to collect and store rainwater runoff, typically from rooftops. Instead of running down driveways and sidewalks to sewers, rainwater falls into a rain barrel where it can be stored for use in gardens and for house plants. They are a simple, efficient, low-cost method for homeowners to conserve water.



## Why are rain barrels beneficial?

- ◆ Collecting the mineral-rich and chlorine free rain that falls on roofs can pay off when used on gardens and houseplants; the results can be a reduction in household water bills.
- ◆ It is estimated that during the hot summer months, the average homeowner uses 40 percent of the household water in the yard.
- ◆ A quarter-inch of rain falling on the average home yields more than 200 gallons of water.
- ◆ In the Chicago area, the average annual rainfall is more than 30" and the average number of days with rain is 127.
- ◆ Conserving the rain that falls on properties will help recharge the water supply and reduce the stress on rivers and streams, which can help reduce flooding.
- ◆ Preserving rainwater reduces the undesirable impacts of having it run down driveways, where it might transport motor oil or gasoline from vehicles, or turf, where it might pick up fertilizers and pesticides. These less environmentally friendly courses for rainwater end up polluting rivers and streams.

## What are the features of The Conservation Foundation's rain barrels?

- ◆ They are 55-gallon containers, stand about 48" high and weigh 400 pounds when full of water.
- ◆ Made of food grade recycled plastic containers which can be painted, rain barrels are available in a variety of colors (choice varies and cannot be guaranteed).
- ◆ They are sealed to keep them safe around children and animals.
- ◆ The screw-off lid is equipped with a screen to keep debris and insects from the water.
- ◆ A valve on the bottom of the barrels to which a hose is attached makes the captured rainwater available through a simple gravity system.
- ◆ A connector at the bottom can be used with a hose to connect to a second barrel.
- ◆ An overflow connector at the top of the barrels allows for a hose to be attached and directed to other landscaped areas.



### **ABOUT THE CONSERVATION FOUNDATION**

*The Conservation Foundation, a nonprofit land and watershed protection organization, is dedicated to preserving open space and natural lands, protecting rivers and watersheds, and promoting stewardship of the environment in northeastern Illinois. Established in 1972 by business and community leaders, it is the only environmental organization to receive the 2008 Annual Award for Business Excellence from The Business Ledger. Working closely with citizens, elected officials, developers, land use planners, park districts and forest preserves, The Conservation Foundation has helped protect more than 30,000 acres of open space.*



## How are rain barrels installed and used?

- ◆ Rain barrels work best when installed on a platform or stand made of concrete blocks or deck boards. The added height increases the water pressure and provides space for a bucket or pitcher to be placed under the valve to dispense water for indoor plants. The Conservation Foundation has wooden stands available for \$20.
- ◆ Once positioned on the platform, the next step is to measure and cut the downspout to a length above the height of the top of the barrel. Downspouts can be cut with a hacksaw. Save the cut-off for reattachment in the winter.
- ◆ Attach two elbows or a 2" by 3" flex-elbow connector which extends from 8" to 18" (available at most hardware stores and home centers) to the downspout to direct water to the top of the barrel.
- ◆ To use, attach a hose (a soaker hose is great) to the bottom valve and direct to landscaping. The water can also be used to wash vehicles or water house plants.
- ◆ The ideal time to install rain barrels is when the rainy season begins in the spring. In the Fall, empty the barrel and store it upside-down. Then replace the downspout.