

## 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 or watering can 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 rainwater to wash cars and bicycles.
- ◆ Use for general cleaning around the house and garden.



The City of Ottawa Rain Barrel Program is an environmental initiative of the Ottawa is Blooming Committee, which is tasked with helping Ottawa Blossom through gardening, recognition of historic preservation efforts, celebrating Ottawa's culture, promoting the arts, and implementation of environmental projects.

The City of Ottawa Rain Barrel Program extends the city's partnership with The Conservation Foundation, which was established in 2013 with the creation of Dayton Bluffs Preserve.

There are many benefits to purchasing a rain barrel. Rain barrels are containers that capture rainwater for later use in your garden, house plants, or to wash your car. Rain barrels effectively reduce the amount of rainwater that reaches the city's sewer system and can help prevent the occurrence of drainage backups. City-wide use can help reduce flooding, as every gallon captured matters! The barrels also reduce pollution by capturing water that would otherwise mix with pesticides and automobile fluids that eventually flow to the river. Water usage is also reduced when residents purchase a rain barrel.

The City of Ottawa Rain Barrel Program is consistent with city's Combined Sewer Separation Long-term Control Plan and the Ottawa Flood Commission's Campaign for Public Information.

To order your rain barrel for \$60 plus tax, visit [www.cityofottawa.org](http://www.cityofottawa.org) or pick up an order form at City Hall (301 West Madison Street).

For information about The Conservation Foundation visit: [www.theconservationfoundation.org](http://www.theconservationfoundation.org)

**Rain Barrels: A Low-Tech Way to Conserve Water and Save Money**



# City of Ottawa Rain Barrel Program



A partnership with the  
City of Ottawa,  
Ottawa is Blooming, and  
The Conservation  
Foundation

## What are rain barrels?

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



## Why are rain barrels beneficial?

- ◆ It is estimated that during the hot summer months, the average homeowner uses 40 percent of household water in the yard. The mineral-rich and chlorine-free rain that falls on roofs can be used to offset household water usage and reduce water bills.
- ◆ A quarter-inch of rain falling on the average roof yields more than 200 gallons of water. In the Chicago area, the average annual rainfall is more than 30", meaning every household could collect 24,000 gallons of water a year in rain barrels!
- ◆ 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.
- ◆ Collecting rainwater where it falls reduces the negative impacts of having it run down driveways and lawns, where it picks up pollutants like motor oil and pesticides and carries them into our 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.



***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 placed on a stand or concrete blocks under a downspout. The added height increases water pressure and provides space for a bucket or watering can to be placed under the valve. The Conservation Foundation has wooden stands available for \$20.
- ◆ Once the barrel is positioned on the platform, measure and cut the downspout to a length just above 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 (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, or simply fill buckets or watering cans to wash vehicles or water 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.