

## 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.

The Conservation Foundation sells rain barrels throughout the year.

**Rain Barrels: \$75**  
**Stands: \$20**

- ◆ Available for purchase at The Conservation Foundation's McDonald Farm in Naperville on Thursdays from 2-4pm April thru September and at many local festivals and events.
- ◆ Payment is accepted in cash, by check or credit card (Visa, Master Card, American Express). **Prices include tax.**
- ◆ For questions or to make purchase or pickup arrangements, call 630-428-4500, Ext. 32 or email [jkleinwachter@theconservationfoundation.org](mailto:jkleinwachter@theconservationfoundation.org).



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

- ◆ Landscaping featuring native plants, initiatives to control invasive plant species.
- ◆ Creation and protection of natural areas.
- ◆ Efforts to reduce erosion and conserve rainwater on property.

Certified homeowners will receive:

- ◆ Comprehensive yard assessment including ideas to improve its environmental friendliness.
- ◆ A Conservation@Home signpost to display in your yard.
- ◆ One year complimentary membership to The Conservation Foundation.
- ◆ Subscription to The Heron magazine and the Conservation@Home newsletter.

For more information, please contact  
The Conservation Foundation.



Help Preserve Our Precious Resources!



# Rain Barrels

*A low-tech way to  
conserve water and  
save money*



**Order Online -  
Reduced Rate &  
Home Delivery Available!**

## 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 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.



### **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 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.