

FACT SHEET: Ready, Set, Rain (Rain Barrels)

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FLORIDA-FRIENDLY LANDSCAPING™ AGENT

Rainfall can easily be captured in a rain barrel, a device used to collect rainwater mainly for landscape irrigation. Harvesting this free natural resource is beneficial to the environment and saves water.

Benefits: Reduce potable (drinking) water used for landscape irrigation; decrease erosion and stormwater runoff; and decrease water source pollution.

Facts: One inch of rain from a 1,000 square foot roof yields 625 gallons. Considering our 50-53 inches of rainfall annually, we could capture 31,000+ gallons of rainwater.

Location: Locate the barrel near a downspout. If you do not have downspouts/gutters, place the barrel under the area where the roof forms a V.

Materials: Food grade container/drum, drill, 15/16" drill bit, brass boiler drain, PVC cement and concrete blocks.

Platform stability: Two or four concrete blocks placed horizontally under a barrel work well. Do not stand the blocks vertically. For more than one layer of blocks, stack in a crisscross pattern. Make sure the ground under the blocks is level and packed down. One gallon of water weighs 8.3 pounds, so a full 55 gallon rain barrel weighs 456.5 pounds.

Installation: To transition from the gutter/downspout to the rain barrel opening, use a cross piece of downspout material or a flexible downspout extender.

Clean barrel prior to installation: Use a green cleaning solution or white vinegar 5 gallons of water.

Painting: Before installation, prime the barrel, then use outdoor acrylic paint. If you don't prime the barrel before painting, use paint specifically for plastic. After painting, let it dry according to the directions; then put 1-2 coats of polyurethane over the paint for protection.

For information on overflow devices, connecting multiple barrels, and maintenance, please register for a rain barrel workshop at:

<http://hillsborough.extension.ufl.edu/HomeGardening/event-calendar.html> or contact <http://watermatters.org> to order your own copy of Rain Barrels, A Homeowner's Guide.

This is a great project to complete before and during our rainy season. My rain barrels are full and my landscape is flourishing! More gardening information is available at:



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<http://hillsborough.extension.ufl.edu> and <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu>. For horticultural assistance, contact the Hillsborough County Extension Office, 744-5519, or visit us at 5339 County Road 579, Seffner, FL 33584. Master Gardeners are available Monday through Friday from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm. We can help!