

# Living Streamside

Guide to Designing your Property and Protecting our Watershed



BACKYARD BUFFER PROGRAM

## Rain Barrels

## Tip Sheet #6

### Description:

- A rain barrel is a small reservoir that captures rain fall (stormwater runoff) coming off a rooftop.
- Stores water that can be used for common household needs (watering plants, washing your car, etc. ).
- Overflow connection can be maintained with city sewer drain.



Photo 2



Photo 1

### Functions/Benefits:

- Decreases impact of runoff to streams.
- Reduces need for use of tap water.
- Raises the awareness about:
  1. the impact a single home can have on the hydrologic cycle,
  2. the quantity of stormwater runoff generated at home and in our City, and
  3. the overall impacts stormwater has on our watershed.

Photo Credits: Photo 1) ECOHOME magazine "Right as Rain" article Summer 2008, Photo 2) Philadelphia Water Department flyer "Rain Barrel Demonstration Project in the Tookany/Tacony-Frankford Watershed"



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### General Installation:

1. Level pavers (e.g.; patio blocks or cinder blocks) next to downspout where barrel will be installed. Ideally, rain barrel is elevated about 12 inches above ground to provide pressure. Pavers need to be level so barrel will not tip over.
2. Disconnect your downspout & install a downspout diverter according to manufacturer recommendations.
3. Connect overflow pipe to sewer drain (if present) or lay the pipe away from your home to drain.
4. Optional discharge (water use) ideas:
  - Connect a soaker hose to a flower bed, garden or planting area.
  - Connect a double headed spigot (hose bib) to bottom of barrel to feed a soaker hose and have a second spigot available for watering can fill up and use.
5. Empty between rain events so barrel can capture water from the next rain event to continue providing relief for streams and municipal water pipes.
6. Empty (turn upside down) for winter and reconnect the downspout to sewer drain (if present).

Philadelphia Water Department (PWD) provides more detailed installation instructions at the following website:  
[www.phillywatersheds.org/rainbarrel/rb\\_hist.htm](http://www.phillywatersheds.org/rainbarrel/rb_hist.htm)

### Sources:

Rain Barrel Workshops: PWD will continue providing rain barrel workshops through the fall of 2009 (weblink for announcements provided below under Reference). After this time PWD will support future workshops provided by civic partners and non-profit organizations.

The Garden Water Saver (diverter): [www.gardenwatersaver.com](http://www.gardenwatersaver.com)

Save the Rain Water (diverter): Rain Barrel Source ([www.rainbarrelsource.com](http://www.rainbarrelsource.com))

Rain Barrels & rain barrel supplies: Rain Barrels by Aaron: [www.ne-design.net](http://www.ne-design.net), Rain Barrel Source: [www.rainbarrelsource.com](http://www.rainbarrelsource.com), Double headed spigot (hose bib): local hardware/home stores

### Cost Estimates:

Rain barrels pre-built	\$100-\$250
Diverter	\$25-\$30

### References

- Philadelphia Water Department's Rain Barrel website: [www.phillywatersheds.org/rainbarrel](http://www.phillywatersheds.org/rainbarrel)
- A Homeowner's Guide to Stormwater Management, Philadelphia Water Department ([www.delawareestuary.org/pdf/HomeownersGuideSWMgmt.pdf](http://www.delawareestuary.org/pdf/HomeownersGuideSWMgmt.pdf))
- This Old House Rain Barrel installation video: [http://www.thisoldhouse.com/toh/video/0\\_20045365\\_00.html](http://www.thisoldhouse.com/toh/video/0_20045365_00.html)
- How to build your own rain barrel website:  
<http://home.comcast.net/~leavesdance/rainbarrels/construction.html>



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