



Roll Out the Rain Barrel!

Water is a valuable **resource**, and one that has dwindled to levels causing serious concerns for Guilford County and the surrounding piedmont triad region. We've had a much wetter season so far in 2009 than in the last few years, but **conserving** water is always a good idea – and one that can save money. One of the easiest and most beneficial ways to save water is to install a **rain barrel**. All of that water that usually runs off the roof, down the spouts and out into the yard can be **captured** and used to grow healthier plants and even to keep up with outdoor cleaning chores – all of which adds up to a lower water bill!



Rain barrels usually come in sizes ranging from 20 gallons up to 100 gallons, and can be purchased from many garden centers and home improvement stores. Also, the Guilford County Agricultural Center stocks **rain barrels** – call (336) 375-5876 for more information, pricing and availability. Installation is easy. Most of today's **rain barrels** are made from plastic – many from **recycled plastic** – but terra cotta models and even some of the old wooden variety can still be found. If you're a do-it-yourself-er, you can find lots of information online about how to construct your own **rain barrel** and save even more money. Whether you buy or build your **rain barrel**, be sure to choose a size that fits your needs and location.

Once you've got your **rain barrel**, installation is easy. Simply position the barrel under a downspout and begin collecting water with the next rain. It is a good idea to ensure that your barrel has the ability to direct overflow to a suitable spot, away from your home's foundation and areas where water might pond. Many **rain barrels** are equipped with an overflow port to which you can attach a hose or pipe. If you choose a barrel without an overflow port, be sure to monitor the water level to avoid overflow.

Most **rain barrels** will also include a spigot that will accept a hose attachment. This makes using your rain water as convenient as using your regular outdoor water faucet.

Rain water accumulates quickly. For example, a one inch rain that falls on a 2,000 sq. ft. roof produces about 1,200 gallons of water runoff. So you'll be able to use your **captured** rain to water your flower pots and planting beds, the vegetable patch and maybe even your lawn. Extra water can be used to clean off the deck, patio and sidewalks or to wash the car. **The EPA estimates that an average American household can save about 1,300 gallons of water over the summer months just by using one rain barrel!**

You...Can Make A Difference!