

WHY USE RAIN BARRELS?

Harvesting rain with barrels is easy, helps conserve the freshwater supply, and reduces stormwater pollution which helps improve Springfield's water quality.

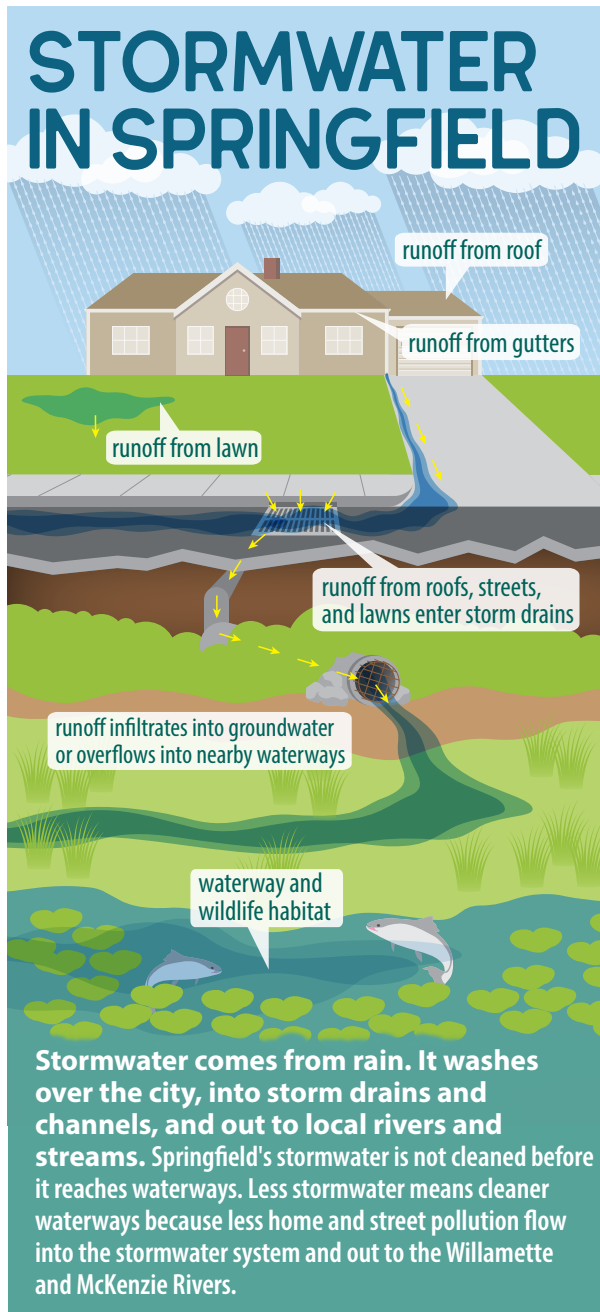
The collected water would normally flow off the roof or through roof gutters and downspouts becoming stormwater runoff. As this runoff washes over hard surfaces, it collects pollutants such as grit from shingles, chemicals from moss treatment, and sediment from decomposing trees and plants. It also collects pollution from lawns, sidewalks, and streets such as fertilizers, pesticides, and motor oil.



Stormwater eventually flows into storm drains and channels and out to local waterways. Collecting roof runoff with a rain barrel reduces the stormwater runoff from your property.

RAIN BARRELS AT A GLANCE

DO'S	DON'TS
Do use rain barrel water on landscaping that will NEVER be eaten. Great places for collected rain are flowers, non-fruit bearing shrubs, trees, lawns, and even to wash vehicles.	Don't use the water collected in your rain barrel for drinking, watering pets, or watering fruits or vegetables. The water may contain chemicals and bacteria that could cause illness.
Elevate your rain barrel on a stable wood or concrete blocks so gravity can help with the flow.	Don't forget to drain your rain barrel before the winter season. Then clean and reconnect the barrel after the last frost.
Do use filters. Place gutter guards and/or screens on top of roof downspouts and on top of the roof to keep leaves and sediment out of the rain barrel. Also make sure the barrel's filter screen is secure to keep out mosquitoes.	When cleaning your barrel, don't empty the dirty water on hard surfaces (walkways, driveways, street gutters, etc.) as that releases pollution into the stormwater system. Empty it on soft ground where plants and dirt can catch pollutants in the water.
Regularly use your collected water between rain events so there's room to capture more.	Don't leave water in your rain barrel for extended periods of time.
Do check the entire system to make sure everything works: roof gutter, debris filter, overflow device, fittings, spigot, etc.	Don't let kids play in or around rain barrels, and don't let the foundation become unstable. A full 55-gallon rain barrel can weigh up to 450 pounds and can cause injury if it falls.



CONTACT US

We're here to help keep Springfield's rivers clean, so we help you and your neighbors do that too!



Find more Clean Water Garden info:
bit.ly/cleanwatergarden, 541.726.3694
WaterResources@springfield-or.gov

CITY OF SPRINGFIELD, OREGON

Clean Water
GARDEN

RAIN HARVESTING

Collect and use your rainwater



WELCOME TO Rain Harvesting IN SPRINGFIELD, OREGON



RAIN HARVESTING refers to the collection and storage of rain. The water is generally collected from rooftops and stored in cisterns or rain barrels. Stored water can be used for non-potable (not drinkable) purposes such as irrigation and washing vehicles. Rain harvesting systems can range from one rain barrel at the bottom of a downspout to a series of tanks with pumps and controls.

COLLECTING RAIN IN THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST

The Pacific Northwest's reputation for rainy winters makes it hard to remember that summers are often dry. From May to September the Springfield/Eugene area receives, on average, about six inches of rain. That's five months that have a mere 13% of our average annual precipitation. During these dry months, a rain harvesting system lets us use the small amount of rain we receive.

How much water to plan for?

$$\frac{\text{Collection area (sqft.)} \times \text{Rainfall (in.)}}{12 \text{ (in/ft)}} = \text{Cubic feet of water}$$

$$\text{Cubic feet} \times 7.43 \text{ (gallons/cubic ft.)} = \text{Gallons}$$

Example: If you had rain barrels for a 1,000 sqft. roof then, after a small rain event of 0.3 inches, you would collect almost 186 gallons of water*

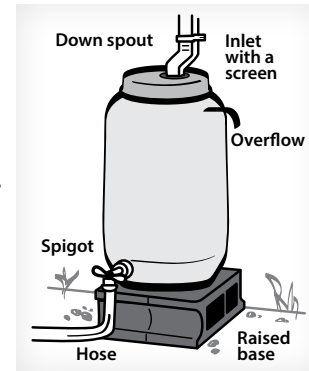
*This calculation is for horizontal areas and does not include system losses such as evaporation or leaks.

REQUIREMENTS FOR A RAIN BARREL

Rain barrels are available in a variety of sizes, colors, and styles. Whether you buy one or make one, there are a few things to consider.

Rain barrels must have:

- Been made from a material that is light-blocking to stop the growth of algae.
- A tight-fitting lid to keep children and animals out of the water.
- A screen to keep leaves and other debris out of the water.
- An overflow device to direct excess water away from your home's foundation when the barrel is full.
- Functioning intakes and overflows. Monitor the barrel to make sure these are not blocked.
- An outlet at the bottom, such as spigot for a hose.



Most rain barrels are placed next to homes on wooden or concrete blocks to provide additional height for gravity flow purposes. People often hook multiple rain barrels together using hoses or pipes to maximize their storage capacity. You can purchase barrels designed to hook together, or build your own.

A plumbing permit may be required for rain harvesting systems larger than 55 gallons: Contact the City of Springfield's Development Center at 541.726.3753.



WATCH OUT FOR EDIBLE PLANTS

The water collected in a rain barrel is not drinkable and should not be used to water any plant used for food. It often contains chemicals from roofing materials or moss killers and bacteria from bird and animal waste. For this reason, rain barrel water should not be used on vegetable gardens and should NEVER be used to wash fruits or vegetables prior to eating.

For non-edible plants, it is best to use this water for drip or trickle irrigation which delivers water on the soil where it's needed.

MAINTAINING YOUR RAIN BARREL

During winter months either empty the barrel between rain events or disconnect the barrel until the dry season.

Once a year, give the interior of your barrel a scrub with vinegar or other non-toxic cleaners. Do not pour used water on hard surfaces like walkways, driveways, or street gutters because it may wash into the stormwater system and that's not allowed. Pour the used water on soft ground where it can be absorbed.

