



## **Build Your Own Rain Barrel**

The "Build Your Own Rain Barrel" program offers New Jersey residents the opportunity to take an active role in recycling rain water by installing a rain barrel at their home at a reduced price. Rain barrels are food grade drums converted with a spigot and screen to collect rain water from roof tops. Rain barrels hold about 50 gallons of water which can be used to outdoor lawn and garden use.

While installing a rain barrel at home is certainly not an answer to our water supply problems, it most certainly serves as a catalyst for change. Rain Barrel workshops have helped New Jersey residents to think about water resources and how they can make a difference.

Harvesting rain water has many benefits including saving water, saving money on your bill, and preventing basement flooding. By collecting rain water, homeowners are also helping to reduce flooding and pollution in local waterways.

Rain barrel workshops have been held in Rahway, Belmar, Egg Harbor Township, East Greenwich, and Livingston. The grant has subsidized a significant portion of the cost of the rain barrels to encourage wider participation.

## **How to Implement "Build Your Own Rain Barrel" Incentive Programs in Your Community**

Fresh water suppliers are under increasing stress in parts of the state because of depleted aquifers, water pollution, urban and agricultural runoff. An easy-to-implement mitigation strategy is rainwater collection. A "Build Your Own Rain Barrel" program offers your community an opportunity to build and install a rain barrels at a reduced price. These programs are in demand and can help create "green jobs" training within your community. If you are interested in implementing this program, you may want to consider the following:

- Determine what you will charge for participants to attend this program. If the screw top food-grade barrels are donated to your community, you may be able to reduce the price of participation. It is important to note that you will need some preparatory time to clean

the barrels. It takes the Water Resources Program 1 hour to power wash and scrub 5 rain barrels. You will also need to dedicate time to collecting the supplies needed for the Rain Barrel building kit. In an effort to save time, you may want to pre-cut out a hole that is 8-12" diameter. We also recommend assembling a rain barrel adapter kit, which would include: flashlights, thread seal tape, tubes of silicone caulk, scissors, paper towels, 1 brass faucet, 1 hose adapter (male,  $\frac{3}{4}$  diameter), 2 PVC plastic adapters (female,  $\frac{3}{4}$  diameter), gray fiberglass screen, adjustable wrench, jigsaw (saber saw) and protective eyewear.

- If you will be implementing a "Train the Trainer" program you may want to consider subsidizing the cost of the demonstration barrel in an effort to recruit volunteer educators who will be responsible for offering this program throughout the community.
- Determine the length of your program. It is important to allow enough time for an educational workshop as well as time to build the rain barrels.
- Determine an appropriate venue for your program.

It is important to know about what the rainwater can be used for as well as how to avoid issues such as bacteria and mosquitoes.