



## SLOW THE FLOW: LET THE RAIN SOAK IN!

### Rain Barrels

#### Why use a Rain Barrel

- ✓ To catch rainwater that falls on your roof for future use, thus reducing polluted storm water flow into streams.
- ✓ To provide water for gardens when needed, thus reducing use of purified potable water for gardening (reducing your immediate costs for water).

**Where do I put it?** At downspout closest to an area that needs water.

#### Precautions

- ✓ Ensure that overflow doesn't run into the foundation of your house.
- ✓ Empty barrel when another storm approaches (or allow a constant slight trickle flow).
- ✓ Secure the barrel so children and animals cannot topple it; secure hose on barrel so children do not drink from it.

#### Actions when using a rain barrel

- ✓ Secure barrel by placing it on a stable, level base (e.g., about 15" high, to provide a small head of pressure)
- ✓ Use mosquito dunks ("donuts") in barrel to eliminate mosquito breeding; or use mesh screening (or landscape cloth) to cover barrel

**Rain barrel water uses:** Potted plants, lawns and gardens. Harvested water is NON-POTABLE and is not recommended to use to fill swimming pools, fishponds or bird baths.

#### Don't use rain barrel water for edibles

- ✓ If your roof has tar, gravel or old asbestos shingles.
- ✓ If you use moss retardant on your roof.
- ✓ If your downspouts have lead paint or lead soldering.

#### Prepare the barrel for winter

- ✓ Store barrel upside down, inside or outside, and reattach your downspout.
- ✓ Alternatively, open all spigots and hoses, so water will not accumulate, and leave in place over winter.

#### Clean barrel annually or semi-annually, as needed:

- ✓ Flush with tap water using nozzle on hose. OR
- ✓ Use 1/4 cup bleach (or 1 cup vinegar) in 2 gallons of water; rinse well.

#### Where can I buy one?

- ✓ Local stores and online (look for "food grade" plastic and avoid barrels with seams along the sides)

#### What if I decide I don't like using the rain barrel I got free from Howard County?

- ✓ RETURN the barrel to the Alpha Ridge Rain Barrel distribution site.
- ✓ DO NOT take the rain barrel to the land fill as trash

**Home and Garden Information Center**  
<https://extension.umd.edu/hgic>

**Howard County Master Gardeners**  
3300 North Ridge Road, Ellicott City, MD 410-313-2707  
<https://extension.umd.edu/mg/locations/howard-county-master-gardeners>

**Howard County Watershed Stewards Academy**  
3300 North Ridge Road, Ellicott City, MD 410-313-2711  
<http://www.howardwsa.org/>

## Rain Barrel Workshop Schedule Alpha Ridge Landfill

2350 Marriottsville Road, Gazebo area

**2020 DATES:** April 18    May 2    May 16    June 6    June 20  
                  July 18    Aug. 1    Aug. 15    Sept. 5    Sept. 19

### No Workshop on JULY 4

Workshops are ongoing from **9:00 am to 11:00 am**. Advance registration is not required.

**Howard County residents** are eligible to receive a free 55-gal barrel with cut-outs for fittings to be used as a rain barrel (*one barrel per address, please*) compliments of the County. Resident must buy fittings and assemble the rain barrel. Rain barrel must be used in Howard County.

Recipient of barrel must fill out pledge form and attend a volunteer-led workshop (*dates above*). Details about where to buy fittings and how to assemble and maintain the rain barrel will be included.



Barrels at Alpha Ridge Landfill

<http://livegreenhoward.com/live/your-home/rain-garden-barrels/>



Control mosquitoes with mosquito dunks



Notice sturdy base and overflow hose



A bit of whimsy