

HIGHLANDS RAIN BARREL PROGRAM

In cooperation with funding provided by **New Jersey American Water Company**, the Borough of Highlands will be initiating a community-wide rain barrel program in the Spring of 2015. Although funding and other resources are limited, we are seeking input from the community as to how they would feel about participating in such a worthy, cost saving and environmentally sound program. For further information on rain barrels and other stormwater management practices, and the impacts they can have within a community, visit http://water.rutgers.edu/Stormwater_Management/rainbarrels.html

What are the benefits of rain barrels?

- 1. You save on your water bill.** According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), outdoor irrigation accounts for nearly 40 percent of water use by households during the summer. Indeed, the water used for watering lawns and landscaping during the summer can exceed the amount of water used for all other purposes in the course of a year. According to the EPA, a rain barrel will save the average homeowner about 1,300 gallons during the summer months.
- 2. Soft water is better for your lawn and garden.** One of the best reasons to install a rainwater-collection system is that the water collected in rain barrels is actually better for plants. Rainwater is superior to tap water due to its purity and softness. It is also slightly acidic, and free from chlorine, salts, mineral, disinfectant byproducts and other contaminants. This free supply of soft water is ideal for lawns, container gardens, or even car washing.
- 3. By individually conserving water and reducing potential inflow and infiltration into the systems, the entire borough may potentially benefit from lower sewer treatment fees.**
- 4. You will be assisting in a community program to reduce flooding, with very little effort.** Less run off during heavy storms and reduced stress on our drainage systems. Rain Barrels will not solve all the flooding issues in Highlands, just as recycling does not eliminate all our trash or completely prevent pollution. However, one of the flooding factors that does affect our town is the run off of water during heavy storms. By capturing that water, you can delay its' entry into the drainage system, and therefore reduce the severity of the flooding caused by run off. The more barrels we have in place the more affective a program will be. Just think about it... 1 55 gallon barrel can equal 55 less gallons running down the street, 10 can equal 550 gallons... with this in mind, you can see that each barrel can add up quickly to a very easy affective storm water management tool!

HIGHLANDS RAIN BARREL PROGRAM

There are some limitations.

The below may not be all the considerations to take with a rain barrel but do outline a few.

1. If you want to use rainwater for drinking, you need to be sure it is properly filtered and meets the legal requirements of your community for potable water.
2. If we use recycled food-grade barrels there may be a desire to make them look nicer, and may need to be painted to blend in with their surroundings.
3. Rain barrels also require occasional maintenance to ensure that everything is working properly. If your roof's downspout is in an inconvenient spot, you may have to rig some extra pipes to direct the water to a spot that can accommodate a rain barrel.
4. Depending on the construction and age of your roof, a rain barrel may not be appropriate for your vegetable garden without being filtered for pollutants.
5. You would be taking responsibility to maintain the barrel and make sure that water is regularly drained from it and/or used during none peak rain falls to assist in stormwater management. (Full barrels don't work well).
6. Initially, this program is intended for residential property owners with one barrel provided to each registered property. Additional distribution may be done if resources are available.
7. RESOURCES ARE LIMITED AND RESIDENTS WILL BE SERVED ON A FIRST-COME, FIRST SERVED BASIS.

For further information on rain barrels and other stormwater management practices, and the impacts they can have within a community, please visit: http://water.rutgers.edu/Stormwater_Management/rainbarrels.html

If interested, please fill out the Rain Barrel survey form and return by April 17, 2015 to the Borough of Highlands – Rain Barrel Program, 42 Shore Drive, Highlands, NJ 07732.

