



RAIN BARREL FACTSHEET

WHAT IS A RAIN BARREL?

Rain barrels capture rain water from a roof during storm events and store it for later use. Stored rainwater is commonly used to water lawns, gardens or orchards.

Collecting roof runoff in rain barrels reduces the amount of water that runs off of your property. Between 40-60% of all urban water is used for outdoor irrigation. Collecting rainwater is a great way to conserve potable water since it generates free water for use in your landscape.

NO PERMITS REQUIRED

Permits are not required for rainwater catchment systems that collect up to 360 gallons of water for outdoor use.

HOW MUCH RAINWATER FLOWS OFF YOUR ROOF?

Multiply the roof drainage area (square feet) by the amount of rainfall (divide by 12 to convert inches to feet). Then multiply the result by 7.48 gallons.

Example for 250 square foot roof area during a 2 inch rain event:

$$250 \text{ sf} \times 0.16 \text{ ft} \times 7.48 \text{ gal} = 299 \text{ gallons}$$

MOSQUITO PREVENTION:

Make sure all openings to rain barrels are covered with screen mesh to prevent mosquito breeding.

Find helpful tips and information at:
www.slocounty.ca.gov/pests





RAIN BARREL CONSTRUCTION

- Rain Barrels should be supported on-grade with a height to diameter (or width) not exceeding 2:1.
- Construct storage barrels of solid, durable materials not subject to corrosion or decay.
- Rain barrels should be made of opaque material to shield stored water from sunlight and prevent algae growth.
- Install an automatic overflow drain, screened with mesh to prevent mosquito access.
- A debris excluder should be installed to prevent the accumulation of leaves, twigs, seeds, or other debris from entering the rain barrel.

RAIN BARREL SAFETY

- Rain barrels should be permanently marked with the words: **"WARNING: CONTAINS RAIN WATER. FOR IRRIGATION ONLY, DO NOT DRINK."**
- Rain barrels should be installed in an accessible area with a means of draining and cleaning.
- Screening mesh should be installed on vent pipes, inlets and overflow pipes to prevent mosquito breeding.
- Rainwater should only be collected from roof surfaces, not driveways or paved areas.
- Barrels should be secured to a foundation or structural wall to prevent them from tipping over.

HELPFUL LOCAL RESOURCES:

For information about constructing larger collection systems, building code requirements, and water use:

Coastal San Luis Resource Conservation District: www.coastalrcd.org (805) 772-4391

Upper Salinas Las Tablas Resource Conservation District: www.us-ltrcd.org (805) 460-7272

County of San Luis Obispo Planning & Building Department: (805) 781-5600

County of San Luis Obispo Public Works Department: (805) 781-5252

County of San Luis Obispo Environmental Health Department: (805) 781-5544