

Rain Barrel Facts

- Rain barrels are containers that collect and store the water from roofs and downspouts for future uses such as watering lawns and gardens, cleaning off gardening tools, and washing your car.
- Rain barrels can lower your water bills by collecting thousands of gallons of free water during a growing season.
- The average rainfall of one inch within a 24-hour period can produce more than 700 gallons of water that run off a typical house!
- Rainwater will pick up anything on the ground, including litter, excess fertilizer, pet waste, and motor oil. Storm drains that collect rainwater DO NOT clean the water before it is dumped directly into our local waterways.
- Using rain barrels is a great way to decrease your household's impact on streams and rivers by collecting water before it pollutes our local waterways.



The Nanticoke River is a local treasure. It's one of the cleanest watersheds that feeds into the Chesapeake Bay. A rain barrel can help you do your part to keep the Nanticoke healthy.

FOR MORE INFO:

www.delawarewatersheds.org



www.NanticokeRiver.org



www.dnrec.delaware.gov

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RAIN BARRELS

**Conserve Water.
Save Money.**



Benefits of a Rain Barrel

The Nanticoke River suffers from pollution like all other rivers in the Chesapeake Bay watershed. Anything on your lawn (household chemicals, fertilizers, pet waste, etc.) can end up in a waterway. When it rains on your roof, water flows into your gutters, then gets dumped onto your yard. This fast-moving water can cause erosion but will also wash pollutants into storm drains or drainage ditches. A rain barrel collects the water before it flows onto your lawn, preventing the water from collecting pollutants and allowing you to use it later for projects around the yard. Pollutants such as fertilizers and pet waste add excess nutrients like nitrogen and phosphorus to the water, that lead to algal blooms and fish kills, as well as unsafe swimming conditions for humans and pets.



Illustration by Frank McShane



Let's do our part!

Nonpoint source pollution comes from many small sources that add up to cause a big impact. Because this type of pollution doesn't come from just one place, it's very hard to correct. Below are other tips to reduce your impact on our waterways.

- Use organic pesticides and "spot treat" problem areas instead of spraying your entire lawn.
- Fertilize responsibly! Most lawns in this area only need fertilizer in the fall. Don't spread fertilizer if rain is in the forecast.
- Plant native perennials and shrubs that flourish in this climate. They do not need the same amount of care as non-native plants.
- Regularly pick up after your pet. If you don't have time, you can hire a pet waste removal service.
- Try washing your car on your lawn so waste water gets absorbed into the ground.

Would you like to host a demonstration rain garden or rain barrel on your property?

Contact the Nanticoke Watershed Alliance at (410)443-8878 or Info@NanticokeRiver.org for more details.

Tips:

- Do not use collected water for drinking, cooking, or bathing.
- Due to chemicals that can leach off of roof shingles, water from rain barrels should not be used for vegetable gardens.
- Keep lid secure so children and pets cannot fall in.
- Make sure the overflow valve does not flow onto pavement, sidewalks, or neighboring properties.
- Disconnect the barrel from the downspout and empty the barrel during the winter to avoid ice that can crack your barrel.
- Use a screen to prevent mosquitoes or try a mosquito dunk that is non-toxic to plants and animals.



A properly set up rain barrel will not allow mosquitoes to grow.