



gwinnettcounty
Department of **Water Resources**

Rain Barrels are Barrels Full of Fun!

Irrigation accounts for nearly half of the average homeowner's water use during the summer. If you are looking for ways to reduce your water usage, don't use drinking water to irrigate your plants, catch water in a rain barrel and use that instead!

A rain barrel collects rain water from a gutter downspout. This water can then be used to irrigate plants with high water demands or which do not get enough rain, without using drinking water. The barrel will have a spigot just like your garden hose, and gravity sends the water to a bucket or hose. Rain barrels are easy to install and maintain. Many come already set-up from a store, or you can purchase a kit and barrel to construct your own. Gwinnett Water Resources will even help you make one at our rain barrel workshops! To get the most use out of your barrel, install it near plants that need to be watered regularly. To prevent algae growth inside the barrel, make sure sunlight can't penetrate the barrel. . This can be done by applying a simple coat of primer, or you can turn your barrel into an art project! Drain and clean the barrel with a small amount of bleach once a year. During the winter, you may want to disconnect the rain barrel or at least drain it soon after it fills to prevent freezing.

Once your rain barrel is set up, it is ready to provide free, renewable rain water for irrigation on your lawn or garden. Using a rain barrel to irrigate helps improve water quality in streams and lakes because it reduces stormwater runoff, which also helps protect stream banks from erosion and can reduce localized flooding. Since the same water comes out of your kitchen faucet as the garden hose, using a rain barrel also helps conserve our main source of drinking water - Lake Lanier.

If you are interested in learning more about rain barrels, come to the Department of Water Resources' Rain Barrel—Make and Take Workshop on February 17th at the Grayson Senior Center. To register, visit the "Events" page at www.gwinnetth2o.com.

