

Also available: Rebates for Compost Bins, Trees, and Native Plants



## Why Install a Rain Barrel at Home?

- Rain water is free!
- Your plants will thank you. Tap water contains chlorine, which, while important for keeping our drinking water safe, can inhibit the health of our plants.
- When combined with your neighbors' efforts, disconnecting your downspout and installing a rain barrel reduces the risk of basement flooding in your area.
- Keep water in the natural water cycle and increase groundwater supply by directing water to your yard instead of the sewer system.
- Improve water quality in the Chicago, Calumet and Des Plaines Rivers by helping to prevent combined sewer overflows.

### DID YOU KNOW?

Chicagoans consume over 500 million gallons of water per day! That's equivalent to over 800 Olympic-sized swimming pools.

## The Issue

After stormwater falls on your roof and travels down your downspouts, it combines with wastewater from your house and flows to the city's sewer. As shown in the diagram to the right, this can lead to basement flooding and street ponding.

## We can help!

### Rebates

We want to give you 50% off (up to \$40) any locally-purchased rain barrel! All you have to do is fill out the attached rebate form and send it in with your original purchase receipt. See rebate form (attached) for more details.

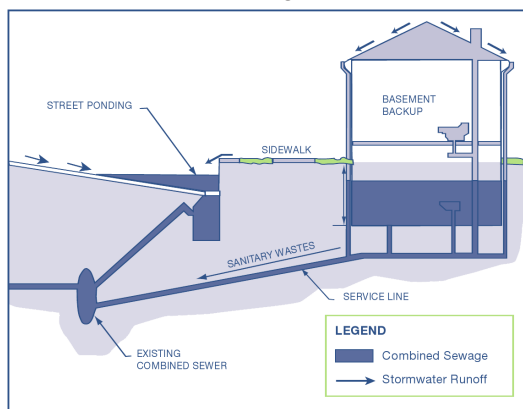
### Workshops

Attend a free Sustainable Backyards Workshop! The City of Chicago, along with its Sustainable Backyards partners, will be hosting a series of free informative workshops across the city. You'll learn the basics of installing and maintaining rain barrels, compost bins, trees and native plants, and can share stories of backyard challenges and successes with fellow attendees. For more details, visit: [www.cityofchicago.org/rainbarrel](http://www.cityofchicago.org/rainbarrel)

### Resources

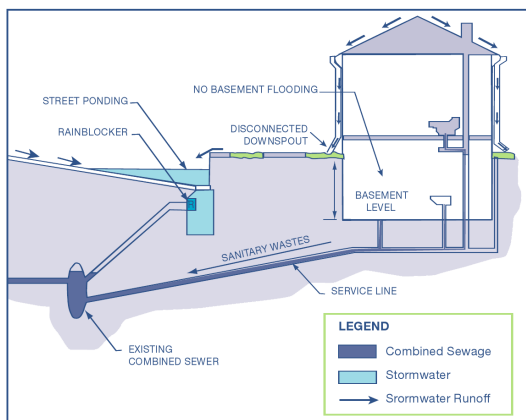
To hear more about rain harvesting in the city, visit the Chicago Rain Harvesting Blog at [www.chicagorainharvesting.wordpress.com](http://www.chicagorainharvesting.wordpress.com).

### I. Basement Flooding



**Diagram I:** During heavy rains, the sewer system can become too full, causing untreated combined sewage to both back up into basements and the street and flow into the river system (this is called a combined sewer overflow or CSO).

### II. Disconnected Downspouts and Rainblockers



**Diagram II:** Keeping stormwater out of the sewers helps to prevent basement back-ups and CSOs. Disconnected downspouts, if directed to pervious surfaces, allow stormwater to soak into the ground. Rainblockers, placed in the catch basins by the City of Chicago, also help by slowing the flow of stormwater entering the sewers, causing temporary street ponding of stormwater. Additional features, such as rain barrels, permeable paving, deep-rooted landscaping and green roofs also help to keep water out of the sewers.

# RAIN BARRELS: how it works ...

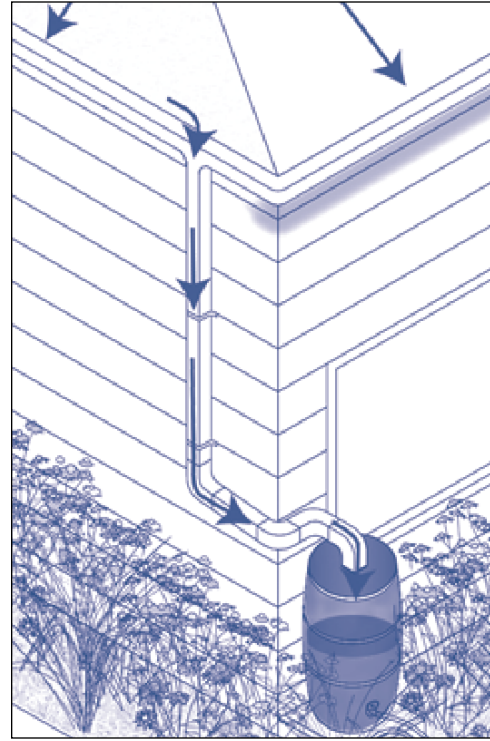
## Is it Appropriate for my Yard?

Before you begin, decide whether or not it is appropriate to disconnect your downspout. In a typical half-inch storm a 1,000 square foot roof will produce about 312 gallons of water, while most rain barrels hold about 55 gallons. Consider where you are directing that water.

- The area surrounding the disconnected downspout should have enough permeable surface to soak up water overflowing from your barrel. Your barrel WILL overflow! Consider planting trees and other leafy, deep-rooted plants nearby.
- Consider the slope of your yard. Overflow should not run toward your foundation or onto your neighbor's property.
- Stormwater should not flow over walkways since the water may freeze in cold weather and cause slippery conditions.

### Materials You'll Need

- Downspout elbow(s)
- Raised base: cinder blocks, bricks or wooden platform
- For aluminum downspouts: hacksaw, screws, screwdriver
- For PVC downspouts: hacksaw, PVC cement
- OPTIONAL: hose to attach to spigot, downspout diverter

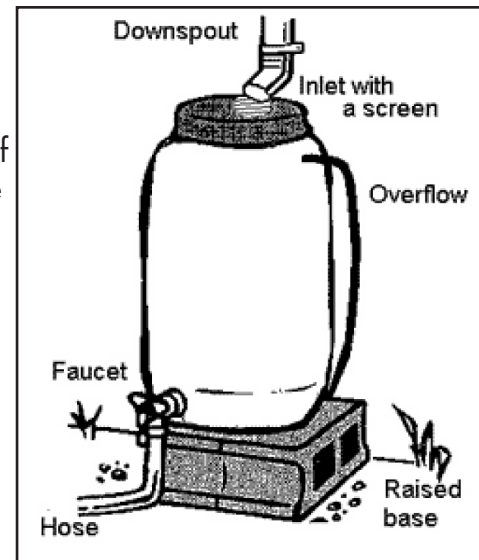


## Disconnecting Your Downspout & Installing Your Rain Barrel:

1. **Choose** a downspout near your garden and with the above considerations in mind.
2. **Secure** your downspout to the house with a bracket.
3. **Cut** downspout using a hacksaw in two places: (1) at least 4 inches above the top of your rain barrel (remember to account for the length of elbow and raised base if you're using one) and (2) a few inches above the ground. Save the removed piece of downspout in case you decide to reconnect over the winter.
4. **Attach** downspout elbow with screws or PVC cement.
5. **Plug** the sewer standpipe (the open hole where your downspout once was) with a rubber plug.

## Using and Maintaining Your Rain Barrel

- DO NOT DRINK THE WATER!
- Empty your barrel frequently; depending on the size of your roof and rain barrel, a ½" rain may cause barrel to overflow.
- Common rain barrel issues are generally the result of neglect. Your rain barrel will only attract insects or become stagnant if it is left unattended for long periods of time.
- Regularly check for leaks, obstructions, debris and integrity of screen.
- Before temperatures fall below freezing, barrel should be drained and spigots left open, stored upside-down, or stored indoors to prevent freezing and cracking. Some rain barrel users reconnect their downspout in the winter using the straight piece of pipe left over from the disconnection process.
- Maximize your stormwater efforts by planting deep-rooted perennials or trees in your yard! Visit the Sustainable Backyards Program website for more information: [www.cityofchicago.org/rainbarrel](http://www.cityofchicago.org/rainbarrel).



# City of Chicago Rebate Form: RAIN BARREL

Thank you for purchasing a rain barrel and taking part in Chicago conserve water and manage stormwater. Please provide the following information and original itemized receipt to receive your rebate. **Illegible or incomplete forms will not be accepted.**

## Personal Information

(please print clearly to receive your rebate):

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: Chicago Zip: 606

Phone: ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Barrel installed at: ☐ same address as above

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: Chicago Zip: 606

Where did you hear about this program? \_\_\_\_\_

Where did you get this rebate form? \_\_\_\_\_

I pledge the information I have provided is accurate and that I have read and understand the attached information. Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

(Sign here)

## Barrel Information

Where did you purchase your barrel? \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Purchase: \_\_\_\_\_

Brand/Model: \_\_\_\_\_

Barrel capacity \_\_\_\_\_ gallons

My rain barrel is/will be receiving water from the roof of my: ☐ House ☐ Garage ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

How large is your above-referenced roof? \_\_\_\_\_ sq ft

How many downspouts are on your above-referenced roof? \_\_\_\_\_

Was your downspout already disconnected?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Does your yard or basement ever flood?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Would you have purchased this item if a rebate was not available? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Total spent: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Total Rebate Requested (50%, up to \$40): \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

CUT HERE - Below This Line is for Your Records

## Rebate Information

- Original receipt (be sure receipt clearly indicates purchase) and completed Rebate Form must be post-marked by December 31, 2012. The City of Chicago reserves the right to deny rebate forms with unclear receipts.
- Rebate checks may take up to 3 months to process.
- Rebate amount: 50% off original purchase price, up to \$40 rebate, per household, per year.
- If you have any questions on the rebate process, please call 312.743.9283 or email [rainbarrel@cityofchicago.org](mailto:rainbarrel@cityofchicago.org).
- Maximum rebates: Rain Barrels \$40, Compost Bins \$50, Native Plants \$60, Trees \$100.

To receive your rebate, please complete the top of this form and submit it along with the original receipt by December 31, 2012, to:

**Chicago Sustainable Backyards Program**  
**Chicago Department of Transportation**  
**30 N. LaSalle, 11th Floor**  
**Chicago, IL 60602**

## Rebate Rules/Restrictions

- Rebates are only available to City of Chicago residents and compost bins must be installed at a Chicago residence. Limit one of each rebate type (rain barrel, compost bin, tree, native plants) per installation address, per year.
- Rain barrel must be purchased between September 1, 2010 and December 31, 2012.
- Rebates will not be offered for rain barrels purchased online (except online pre-orders from local vendors). Rebates are only available for the cost of rain barrels. Other materials, taxes and individual costs will not be applied to rebates.



Rahm Emanuel  
Mayor



# Sustainable Backyards Program: LANDSCAPING TIPS

## UNDERSTANDING YOUR SITE

### LAYOUT

Take a good look at your site. Note the placement of existing plants and trees, paved areas, buildings and power lines. Take a few days to monitor which areas get full or partial sunlight and take note of low spots that tend to collect water during rain storms.

### SOIL

Determine your soil type before you purchase new plants or trees and check with your local garden center for species adapted to your soil type. If you are planning to grow vegetables, build a raised bed or have your soil tested to ensure it is safe for growing vegetables.

### SUN

Before you buy new plants or trees, be sure to note the sunny and shady areas of your yard. Each species has its own sunlight requirement and should be planted accordingly. Look for opportunities to use trees for shading a seating area or the windows of your home.

## CONVENTIONAL LANDSCAPING

- Generates stormwater runoff and puts stress on our sewers while wasting treated water.
- Can be expensive to maintain, requires new planting annually.
- Sometimes includes exotic and invasive species.
- Can require the use of fertilizers and pesticides.
- Yearly planting, fertilizing and maintenance generates excess waste.
- Does not promote energy efficiency.
- Often promotes materials shipped from far away at great cost.

## SUSTAINABLE LANDSCAPING

- Minimizes stormwater runoff and utilizes valuable rainwater for irrigation.
- Minimizes maintenance costs by utilizing perennials & long-term landscape planning.
- Designed with native species that have adapted to survive in our climate and do not require fertilizers or pesticides.
- Native plants maintain 4-season appeal by attracting and sustaining our native birds and other wildlife year-round.
- Low-maintenance means low-waste. The waste generated is composted and reused throughout the landscape.
- Promotes home energy efficiency.
- Supports our local businesses.

## SUSTAINABLE LANDSCAPING TIPS

- Use locally-sourced and recycled materials where possible.
- Avoid impermeable surfaces. Utilize permeable materials where possible.
- Use homemade compost instead of store-bought fertilizers. See [www.chicagohomecomposting.org](http://www.chicagohomecomposting.org) for more information.
- Practice Integrated Pest Management instead of applying pesticides.\*
- If you choose to keep a lawn, utilize natural lawncare practices.  
\*See [www.spcweb.org/yards](http://www.spcweb.org/yards) for more information.
- To maximize energy savings, strategically plant trees to serve as wind-blocks in the winter and shade your home in the summer. See [www.landscapeforlife.org](http://www.landscapeforlife.org) for more information.

**50% Off!**

To promote the many ways residents can create more environmentally-friendly landscapes in their yards, the City is offering rebates to Chicago residents for up to 50% off their next local purchase of:

**TREES** (up to \$100 back)

**NATIVE PLANTS** (up to \$60 back)

**COMPOST BIN** (up to \$50 back)

**RAIN BARREL** (up to \$40 back)

