



Rain Barrels



Behavior: Install and properly use one or more rain barrels on your property.

Background: Rain barrels are for more than just a slow, steady watering to your plants. Rain barrels are primarily a way to slow down rain water and soak it into the ground gradually. This reduces flooding and erosion during major rain events and helps recharge groundwater. Although rain barrels may not capture the total runoff from a rainstorm, they capture the first flush, which contains the most polluted water. Rain barrels do not filter water on their own, but simply capture rain water from downspouts temporarily and slowly release it through a small spigot over the 48 hours following a rain event, until drained. Water drained on pervious surfaces soaks into the ground where it is cleaned and cooled. Rain barrels come in many sizes and colors and can be attached to almost any downspout. Choose this behavior in a community with a high water table and flooding problems. Encourage the pairing of rain barrels with conservation landscapes.

Barrier: I think they are unattractive.

1. CUSTOMIZED BARRELS (communication)
Distribution Methods: community events, display publicly, show pictures in person or online

2. RAIN BARREL PHOTO BOOK (communication)
Distribution Methods: show at outreach events or online

Many people are opposed to getting a rain barrel because they dislike the appearance of rain barrels that they have seen or their family dislikes the idea. Showing these people the many styles and colors of barrels that they could install may change their mind about the aesthetics of the barrels.

Customized Barrels: Show the many facets of rain barrels by getting customized painted rain barrels. These could be painted by local artists, children, or could be painted at an event by the homeowner artistically or to match their house. [Design template and painting instructions available from WSA.](#)

Rain Barrel Photo Book: This binder includes color pictures of painted rain barrels, a list of local vendors with pictures and information about the barrels they sell and design sheets for people to sketch out their own rain barrel design. [Available for checkout and digitally from WSA.](#)

Barrier: I don't think that my small action can make a difference. / I haven't gotten around to it.

1. COMMUNITY EVENT (social diffusion; social norm)
Distribution Methods: advertise on communication handouts, internet presence, press releases

2. RAINDROP PLEDGE AND PLEDGE DROPS (commitment; social norm)
Distribution Methods: community events, door-to-door, phone, online form; display names of people who pledge in a community newsletter or public place

3. RAIN BARREL THERMOMETER (feedback)
Distribution Methods: post in public place, update regularly



People often feel helpless when it comes to their impact on the environment. They do not believe that their actions make a difference. They need to be motivated by feeling like they are part of a group effort or by a commitment to themselves.

Community Event: Holding a community event in which you talk about the behavior you wish to encourage and try to get people excited about working towards those behaviors as a community. It could be a small cocktail party at a neighbors house or a big block party.



Raindrop Pledge and Pledge Drops: People will be more inclined to carry through with the behavior if they have pledged to do so. The act of committing themselves to doing the behavior can be an internal motivation (they will feel bad if they don't do it) or put social pressure on them if their commitment is publicized to community members. This pledge is a commitment to themselves and to you and is shaped like a rain barrel (you should get their contact info and follow-up). You can also publish their names and post them publicly on these blue rain-drop sheets. [Editable design and drop template available from WSA.](#) Cost: [printing/ colored paper](#)

Rain barrel thermometer: In order to show people that they are not alone and that everyone together can make a big difference, this thermometer will show how close the audience is to reaching your goal. It is a 2'x3' aluminum sign with post that depicts a rain barrel. A blue vinyl strip is added to "fill" the barrel for every 10% of your goal reached. [Available for checkout from WSA.](#)



Barrier: I don't understand the purpose of a rain barrel. / I don't have any use for the water. / I never knew about rain barrels or considered having one. / I don't know where I can get a rain barrel.

1. ROAD SIDE SIGNS (communication)

Distribution Methods: post along side of road where most people can see them

2. DEMONSTRATION BARREL POSTERS (communication)

Distribution Methods: post on a publicly displayed barrel or just in public areas around town

3. POSTCARDS (communication)

Distribution method: direct mail, email, handout in door-to-door event



4. SOCIAL MEDIA PRESENCE (communication; social norm; feedback)

Distribution method: share the link via email, community site or printed communications

5. DEMO RAIN BARREL (communication)

Distribution method: use at events or install in a highly trafficked public area

In most cases, people will not install a rain barrel if they do not know what a rain barrel is or why they should have one. They need to be educated and made aware of the benefits of rain barrels and how they can have their very own!

Road Side Signs: This includes 3 sets of 3 signs that can be changed out or placed in different areas around your community. The signs are meant to be read as you drive by. The first 2 signs in the series describe a benefit of rain barrels, while the third sign simply says "Install Rain Barrels." These signs are a way to get your audience thinking about rain barrels, highlights the benefits of rain barrels and shows various styles of rain barrels. [Signs available for free check-out from WSA.](#) [Editable designs available from WSA.](#) **Cost: ~\$25/sign**

Rain Barrel Posters: This is a series of 8 posters that are meant to be posted on a publicly displayed rain barrel. The signs depict drops of water that have messages about the importance of rain barrels. WSA also has a RainScaping.org poster entitled "Why use Rain Barrels?" which discusses in more detail the reasons to use rain barrels. [Posters available for check-out from WSA.](#) [Editable designs available from WSA.](#)



Postcards: This postcard has a diagram of the flow of runoff from rain to the river, with information about stormwater harvesting and how to order a rain barrel. [Editable design available through WSA.](#) **Cost: printing/postage**

Social Media Presence: Consider creating a facebook or other group that community members can follow to stay up to date on your campaign and get feedback about how the community is doing.

Demonstration Rain Barrel: This could be either a regular rain barrel that you install in a publicly visible place as an example of what a rain barrel looks like installed and something to get people thinking about rain barrels or it could be a demonstration rain barrel that has a downspout and pump attached so that people can see the water flow through it. **Cost of regular rain barrels: \$60- \$80 from Arlington Echo.** [Working demo barrel available for checkout from WSA.](#)

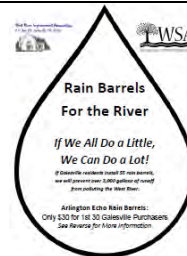
Barrier: I don't want to put forth the effort it would take to obtain and install a rain barrel./ I don't have enough time. / Rain barrels are too expensive./ I am afraid to install one myself.

1. COUPON (incentive)

Distribution Method: email, community events, post in public location, door-to-door

2. INSTALLATION HELP (convenience)

Distribution Method: offer as needed, advertise during campaign



A lot of people are hesitant to use a rain barrel because they cost too much or because they are too busy or afraid to actually install the barrel. You can help them overcome these barriers by offering them assistance in cost and installation.

Coupon: This coupon is a sheet with a raindrop shape printed on it and information about the discount and can be printed on blue paper. If you can find the funding you can offer to subsidize the cost of a rain barrel. This could be grant funded or you could solicit discounts from local vendors. Additionally, Watershed Stewards may place bulk orders (10 or more) for Arlington Echo rain barrels for a \$20 discount/ barrel. [Editable coupon design available from WSA.](#) [Bulk order form available from WSA.](#) **Cost: printing/ colored paper**

Installation Help: A list of qualified volunteers who are willing to help install rain barrels if help is needed. You may also want to learn how to install rain barrels so that you can personally help. [List/ liability forms and some tools available from WSA.](#)

Evaluation Possibilities

Count barrels installed (follow up with pledges)