Saving Water in Your Yard

Residential water consumption increases by 50% during summer months, most of which is used on lawns and gardens. By utilizing rainwater, and reducing your lawn's water needs, you can significantly reduce the amount of treated drinking water you use in your yard each year.

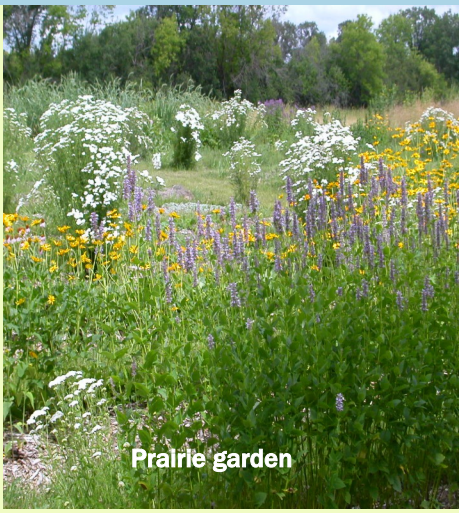
Improve Soil Health

- A healthy soil is able to absorb more water, and will therefore require less watering and decrease rainwater runoff.
- To build a healthy soil, incorporate organic matter, such as compost, and aerate periodically.
- Organic mulches, such as wood chips, mulched leaves, grass and compost, applied in the garden help retain soil moisture and divert yard waste from landfills.

Improve Plant Health

- Healthy plants will have good root systems that can access water deep in the soil.
- Microrhizzal fungi, found in compost tea and other organic fertilizers, help develop strong, healthy plant roots.
- Leave grass 2.5 in. (6 cm) long and cut less frequently with sharp blades. The grass will be healthier, require less water, and reduce soil evaporation.

Choose the Right Plants


Prairie garden

Plant Native Species:

- Plants that are indigenous to a region have adapted to thrive in its climate, requiring little to no additional watering once established.

Work with your Space:

- Choose hardy grass varieties that are suited to your lawn's conditions.
- Choose areas of the yard that will give the plants what they need, and group vegetation by water requirements. E.g. low areas where water pools get moisture-loving plants, drier zones get hardier plants that grow in arid soils.

Design with Water in Mind:

- Xeriscaping is the process of 'dry landscaping' - planting lawns and gardens that will require little to no additional water. If you plant according to slope and drainage properties, incorporate drought-resistant plants, reduce turf-grass and use an efficient in-ground irrigation to do whatever minimal watering you have left, you are xeriscaping!


Rain barrel

Water Wisely

Watering deeply and **less often** promotes deep roots and healthier grass, which will survive dry periods by using water in the soil. Watering in the early morning reduces evaporation.

Watch for rain in the forecast: Treated drinking water contains chlorine and other chemicals that may be harmful to the health of your plants. Natural rainwater is the best thing for plants.

Rain gauges and **watering gauges** are useful in determining how deeply your plants have been watered (either from rainfall or from sprinklers/ irrigation systems), and to **prevent overwatering**, which can harm plants, wastes water, and costs you money. A lawn requires approximately one inch (2.5 cm) of water per week.

Make use of gathered rainwater: Using rain barrels is a great way to get free, clean water for your yard!


Rain gauge

www.mbeconetwork.org

Rain Barrels

Manitoba eco-network

Benefits of Rain Barrels

- Rain barrels are cost-effective because they provide hundreds of litres of free, untreated rainwater each year.
- They help prevent sewer flooding, which in turn protects water bodies.
- They decrease the risk of soil erosion due to storm surges.
- They reduce the amount of water that runs through sewars to water treatment plants.
- They can be made from common materials with little effort.


Spigot


3 linked rain barrels

Rain barrels can be placed under drain spouts to collect hundreds of litres of rainwater runoff from your roof that can then be used in your yard.

Using your Rain Barrel– FAQs


Planter rain barrel

How much runoff can I catch in one rain shower?

- One inch (2.5 cm) of rain falling on 1000 square feet of roof will yield 600 gallons (2270 L) of water. Typical rain barrels (55 gallons/ 208 L) can be filled in as little as 5 minutes during a heavy shower, so consider linking barrels with hoses (see below).

What about overflow?

- You can use connective hoses to direct overflow into one or more rain barrels, to an irrigation system, or into a garden. Or, try a larger model (often called a cistern)- they can hold as much as 1500 gallons (5700 L).

What are good uses for my rain barrel water?

- You can use rain barrel water in several ways: lawns, flower gardens, pools, washing cars and driveways, irrigation systems...

Is my rain barrel water suitable for drinking or use in edible gardens?

- Unfortunately, no. Rain barrels collect water running off your roof, which may contain bird droppings, lead and other chemicals used in roofing/siding materials, and possibly mosquito larvae– so it cannot be considered suitable for human consumption.

What about mosquitoes?

- In order to prevent mosquitoes from breeding in your rain barrel, ensure that it is fitted with a good screen. A partial cover will also prevent algal growth caused by excessive

Where to get Rain Barrels?

Homemade Rain Barrel plans can be found at:
http://whatcom.wsu.edu/ag/compost/rainbarrel.htm

Paul's Containers: phone: 299-3594
$25 (barrel without tap)
$89.99 (barrel w/ single tap) ON SALE $74.99
$99.99 (barrel w/ double tap) ON SALE $89.99

Home Depot:
Prices range from $79.99 (Heaven& Earth 200 L collapsible rain barrel) to $229.99 (Madison Rain Catcher)

Canadian Tire:
Prices range from $79.99 (Fiskars Saguaro Rain Barrel) to $139.99 (Rain Collector, 87 Gallon)

Where to get additional components:

- Rain barrel diverter kit available at Canadian Tire for $32.99
- Aim-A-Drain (downspout diverter) $15.99 at Canadian Tire
- Flex-a- Spout $14.99 at Canadian Tire
- Elbows (to be used as connectors, can be modified) available at Home Depot for $3.67
- Flex Elbow $5.99 at Canadian Tire


Rain barrel/tumbler