



Peters Brook Residential Rain Barrel Rebate Program



Rebates of **up to \$200** to install rain barrels at your home!

What is a rain barrel?

A rain barrel is a system that collects and stores rainwater from a roof that would otherwise be runoff diverted into storm drains, streets, or streams.

To receive the rebate:

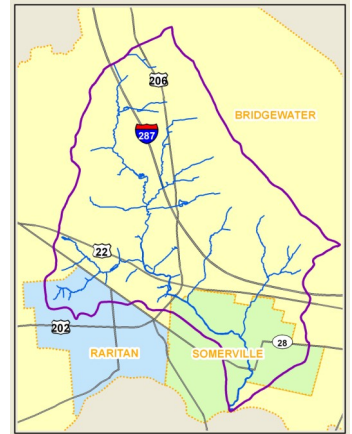
Purchase and install a rain barrel at your residence **within the Peters Brook Watershed** that meets all criteria listed below.

Obtain a rebate application form from www.regionalcenterpartnership.org, your municipal clerk's office, or the county administration office.

Submit the rebate application with a copy of your purchase receipt and post-installation photo to New Jersey Water Supply Authority. Maximum 2 rebates per property.

Installation inspections will be conducted by NJWSA staff prior to rebate issuance.

Peters Brook Watershed



Which rain barrels are eligible for the rebate?



- **Volume:** Minimum of 40 gallons
\$100 for rain barrels that hold more than 70 gallons
\$50 for rain barrels that hold 40-70 gallons
- **Mosquitos:** closed design or a screen top with holes no larger than a window screen
- **Overflow:** to direct water away from the foundation or have an automatic diversion system on your downspout
- **Spigot:** to access water no higher than 3" from the bottom of the barrel
- **Purchase date:** after July 1, 2011
- Barrel must be made of a **sturdy material** and installed on a **solid, level base**
- **Homeowners must pledge to maintain their rain barrel for at least 2 years**
- Barrel vendor options, installation considerations, and maintenance tips can be obtained at this packet. Please call (908) 685-0315 x234 with any questions.
- Have another barrel in mind? Call before buying to see if it is eligible.



Why are the NJ Water Supply Authority and the Regional Center Partnership offering rebates on rain barrels?

Rooftops, driveways, roads and other impervious areas comprise about 30% of the Peters Brook Watershed, which covers parts of Somerville, Bridgewater and Raritan. Rainwater runoff from impervious surfaces flows to our streams, picking up pollutants along the way. In addition to water conservation, rain barrels also help the environment by reducing the amount of water going to our streams and rivers during heavy storms, easing stream erosion. The Regional Center Partnership administers the Peters Brook Rain Barrel Rebate Pilot Program with a grant funded by the NJ Water Supply Authority.

Peters Brook Residential Rain Barrel Rebate Program

Rain Barrel Purchase Information

Location eligibility: must be on a **residential** property within the Peters Brook Watershed. Contact the New Jersey Water Supply Authority Watershed Protection Programs at 908-685-0315, extension 234 or e-mail rainbarrel@raritanbasin.org if you are unsure if you are eligible. If you are not the homeowner, or if you live in a townhouse/condo/apartment, ensure that you obtain written permission from your landlord or homeowner's association.

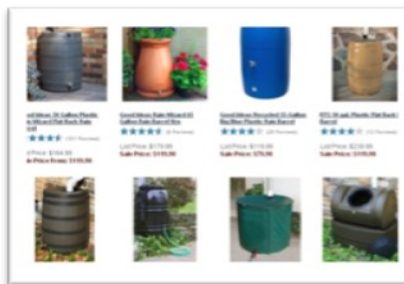
Rain barrels must be purchased or assembled after July 1, 2011 and meet the following criteria:

- ◆ **Volume:** Minimum of 40 gallons
- ◆ **Mosquitos:** closed design or a screen top with holes no larger than a window screen
- ◆ **Overflow:** to direct water away from the foundation or have an automatic diversion system on your downspout
- ◆ **Spigot:** to access water no higher than 3" from the bottom of the barrel
- ◆ Barrels must be made of a **durable material** and installed on a **solid level base** (converted garbage cans are not allowed).

Several Options to Get Your Rain Barrel

- ◆ Attend a Rutgers "Build a Rain Barrel" workshop. See website for dates and cost information: http://water.rutgers.edu/Stormwater_Management/rainbarrels.html
- ◆ Visit your local hardware or garden supply store, or search online for "rain barrels". Ensure barrels meet the above criteria; contact NJWSA if you have questions regarding barrel eligibility at 908-685-0315 x234 or rainbarrel@raritanbasin.org.
- ◆ Build your own barrel to meet the above criteria. Contact NJWSA for technical assistance.

Samples of online search results



<http://www.rainbarrelsource.com>

current cost: \$119.98 - \$249.99

barrel size: 40 – 156 gallon



<http://www.gardeners.com/>

current cost: \$149 - \$219

barrel size: 40 – 75 gallon



<http://www.cleanairgardening.com/rainbarrels.html>

current cost: \$149 - \$219

barrel size: 40 – 75 gallon

When choosing the right location for your rain barrel, keep a few things in mind:

- Proximity to use areas (garden, lawn, etc.): Choose an area where the water from your rain barrel can easily be used with a soaker hose or watering can.
- Disconnection of impervious surface: Look at where your downspout goes, if it goes directly to the street or storm drain, placing a rain barrel here will provide a greater water quality benefit.

Installing your rain barrel will vary slightly from model to model. If you purchase a rain barrel, it may come with installation directions. This rebate program requires that your barrel be installed on a **solid, level surface**. Two examples shown here (at right) are cinder blocks, and a constructed box filled with gravel and bricks on top. Ensure that the ground is level, and use a level to make sure the base is level from side to side and front to back.

Tip: While the base does not need to be elevated, a raised platform will allow you to use a watering can and the spigot will be easier to access.



Determine where the overflow from your rain barrel will be directed. If your barrel does not have an automatic diversion system, you will have an overflow (see photo left). Attaching a hose (at least 8 feet in length) will **direct water away from your foundation** when your barrel fills, and will prevent mosquitos for using this as an entryway into your rain barrel.

Rain barrels require the downspout to be cut. If your system has an automatic diverter, follow the directions for installation. If your barrel will be elevated, build the base first to determine the appropriate height.

You can cut the downspout just above the barrel (top right) and use a small section of flexible hose or a downspout elbow, or replace the entire downspout with a flexible hose (bottom right).

Use a hacksaw or saber saw to cut the downspout pipe, and use a piece of cardboard or flashing to protect siding or other house materials. Use downspout screws to attach the elbow or flexible hose to the downspout. Keep the cut portion for reinstallation in the winter.

Tip: Remember that you will need to disconnect your rain barrel in the winter.

Visit http://www.raritanbasin.org/rain_barrel.html for more installation information.

If you have any questions or concerns about installation, e-mail NJWSA at rainbarrel@raritanbasin.org or call 908-685-0315 x234.



During the season (late March/early April to late October)

- Empty your rain barrel regularly—do not let water sit for more than 1 week after a rain storm.
- Ensure barrel is empty prior to any significant storms (a quarter inch of rain will fill most rain barrels).
- Clean your gutters regularly to reduce debris
- Periodically, inspect barrel for any leaks and make sure all parts are working properly and not clogged.
- Keep rain barrel on a stable, level surface. Ensure weight (e.g., bricks) is on the top so the barrel does not tip over when empty.

End of the season (late October)

- Completely empty your rain barrel, rinse out (use vinegar or other non-toxic agent), scrubbing is recommended.
- Disconnect your rain barrel from the downspout, and either re-attach your original downspout, or use a flexible hose to reach the ground or splash pad. [This ensures that you will not have water freezing in your barrel that can lead to cracking and splitting.]
- Store the barrel upside down, or inside a shed or basement. Reconnect your barrel in late March.

Tips & Troubleshooting

- NEVER use your rain barrel for drinking water. If you choose to use collected rainwater for growing edible fruits, vegetables or herbs, a sample of the water can be taken and sent to a certified water testing laboratory. Always rinse with potable tap water before consuming.
- If mosquito concerns arise, use a small amount of dish soap, vegetable oil, or commercial mosquito control product (e.g., Mosquito Dunks, etc.) in the barrel.
- Avoid collecting rainwater from roofs that have been treated with moss killer recently (up to 3 months).
- A soaker hose works very well attached to the spigot if a garden bed is nearby, continuously watering the garden or lawn (typically takes 2-3 days to empty a 55 gallon rain barrel).
- Plan to use with soaker hoses and water cans. There is not enough flow (pressure) to use a sprinkler or spray nozzle.
- If algae growth occurs, add a cap full of liquid bleach to a full barrel (this will not harm plants).
- Repurposed food-grade barrels can be painted! Sand with a fine sandpaper, and use a plastic primer (spray paint). Barrels can be decorated using acrylic paint. A clear coat of polyurethane will ensure the paint will not fade or chip when exposed to the elements.

Benefits of your rain barrel

- Reduce rain water that carries pollutants to streams
- Reduce water consumption
- Naturally soft water, devoid of chemicals for your plants
- Use it to:
 - ◆ Water garden plants
 - ◆ Water your lawn
 - ◆ Wash the car or dog
 - ◆ Rinse muddy boots or sandy beach chairs