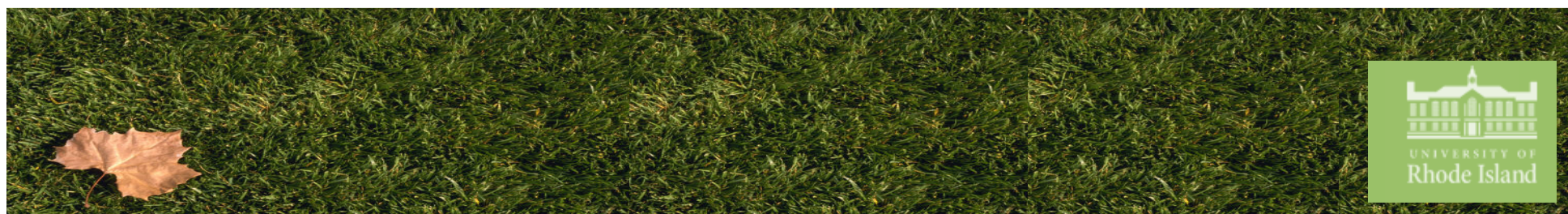


Why Rain Barrels?



A rain barrel collects and stores rainwater from rooftops to use later for lawn and garden watering. Water collected in a rain barrel would normally pour off your roof directly or flow through roof gutter downspouts and become stormwater runoff. Depending on your yard, this runoff can travel onto paved surfaces and eventually into a storm drain and nearby waterbody.



Advantages of Rain Barrels

Lawn and garden watering make up nearly 40% of total household water use during the summer. A rain barrel collects water and stores it for when you need it most -- during periods of drought. It provides an ample supply of free "soft water" to homeowners, containing no chlorine, lime or calcium making it ideal for gardens, flower pots, and car and window washing.



Some simple planning will prevent the most common problems with rain-saving.

- **Use a tight-fitting, light-blocking lid to keep children and animals out of the water and stop the development of algae.**
- **Add a screen to keep leaves and other debris out of the water.**
- **Use an overflow device to direct excess water away from your home's foundation when the tank is full.**
- **Note: Water stored in this system is not potable unless treated, and should not be used as drinking water.**

If this all seems like a lot of work for a little water, remember that one inch of rain falling on 1,000 square feet of roof adds up to 623 gallons. That's enough to keep a lot of petunias happy!

So What's Next?

For more ideas, go on-line or to a local library to find out about additional ways to reduce dependency on water for the yard and garden

- Rain gardens. A single rain barrel will not usually be able to contain all the runoff from a heavy storm. To handle larger volumes of water, rain barrels are best used in conjunction with other water management strategies such as rain gardens.
- Planting with Native Vegetation. Native plants are suited to our unpredictable climate. They have deep roots that help use up rainwater and they offer habitat to native birds, butterflies, frogs, and turtles.
- Use fertilizers, pesticides, herbicides, irrigation, compost etc., wisely and effectively.

