

Live Free and Dig

with the Littleton Garden Club

Water collection barrels

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Littleton Garden Club

An old Pepsi-Cola barrel spotted on a Chichester road years ago sure has come in handy.

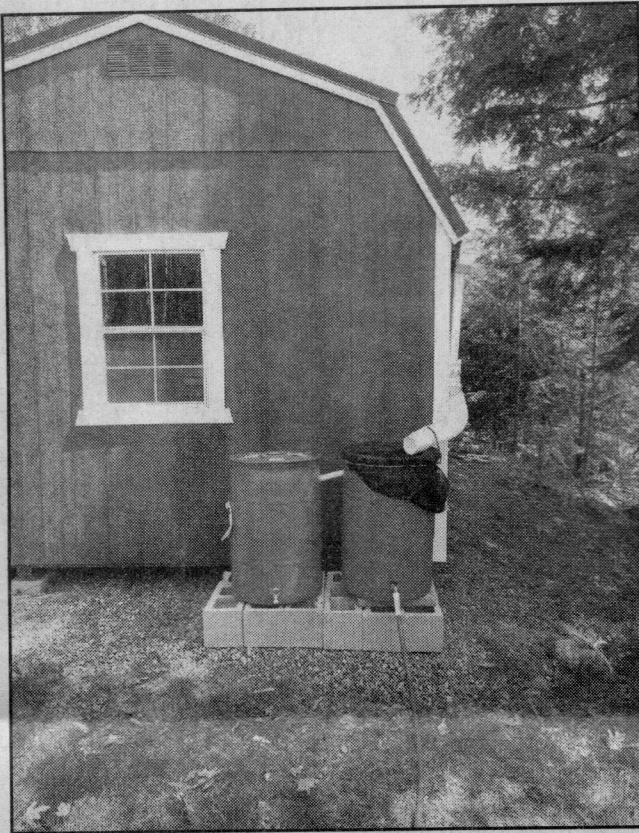
About 6 years ago my partner converted it into a rain barrel that we use for lawn and garden projects.

Rainwater barrels conserve precious water. Adequate water keeps plants flourishing

during droughts. This past summer's dry spell left us grateful. Our heirloom tomatoes, kitchen herbs and perennial gardens remained healthy. The catchment system takes valuable rainwater from roofs. It made sense to us & plants prefer untreated water. Shrubs and thirsty plants flourish while a water bill's impact lessens.

Making your own Rain barrel system

Our costs were \$15 for the barrel, \$18 for



the downspout and \$12 for fittings. Scrap hose was used. The 55-gallon barrel was flipped on its side. The downspout was cut to put in the diverter. Piece by piece, the project took about four hours to

complete.

After setup, it was easy to use. Amazing how quickly the barrel would fill after a rain event. We appreciate free water with a gravity set up. We rarely used our outside

house faucet/hose.

Barrels are available on Craigslist That may save paying full retail costs. Soda, maple or honey producers use barrels and may sell them to you. Some garden centers carry a selection as well. There are pre-made rain barrels available in many sizes and styles. Prices range from \$50 to over \$275.

Pollen sediment and decaying matter accumulates over time; diverters need cleaning. We sealed the top opening from mosquitoes entering but allowed air to escape. A 55-gallon barrel is very heavy when filled. We took precautions as it is close to our foundation.

As rainwater flows over a roof surface it can pick up pollutants such as bacteria from birds and animals, or chemicals from roof materials - factors to consider when thinking about using

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rain barrel water on edible plantings.

Multi-barrel systems

Another local example uses multiple barrels strategically placed uphill from an extensive vegetable garden. Tom, from Whitefield, had no existing water source where his garden was to be located. His garage, uphill from the garden, was fitted with gutters at a cost of \$100. Free barrels were situated on cinder-blocks & connected with pieces of hose. Gravity pressure makes his watering task easy.

Tom cleans his gutters regularly as debris removal keeps water flowing freely.

See pictures of his clever multi-barrel setup.

There is a prepared PDF available for NH residents on using water barrels:

<https://www4.des.state.nh.us/Soak-NH/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/NH-Homeowner-Guide-2016.pdf#page=34>

Here in northern New Hampshire it's recommended to completely empty rain barrels before the winter months.

Water conservation projects can be satisfying.

Happy gardening!

Littleton Garden Club is a fun, busy and active group in the community. We welcome new members. For more information see us on Facebook or visit our Web site at: <https://www.littletonnhgardenclub.org/>.