



THE GREAT AMERICAN RAIN BARREL

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Walpole, MA — March 31st, 2023

Record Flooding and Drought — Weather Whiplash Events

During the summer of 2022, all of Massachusetts was experiencing drought conditions for the first time in more than seven years, with 40% in the extreme drought category. Boston which normally relies on 3.27 inches of rain in July, got only 0.62 inches, according to the National Weather Service. Some experts are calling droughts like this *flash droughts*.

Droughts create challenges for local water supply by reducing surface water storage and the recharge of groundwater supplies, including private wells. Rivers are running low and many streams have gone dry or become a series of disconnected puddles. Lawns are crunch, vegetation is shriveling and groundwater levels are plummeting.

Severe droughts can actually make both rainfall and flash flooding more severe, creating *weather whiplash events*. The quick and heavy rainstorms that we have experienced this Fall make it impossible for the water to penetrate into the soil which has become rock hard. The rainwater ends up as runoff.

Educating and encouraging local residents to use a rain barrel is one of the many ways homeowners can be part of the solution.

“We are encouraging residents to use rain barrels because they help the town manage its water resources by reducing runoff, lowering municipal water demands, saving energy at treatment plants, and improving residential storm management. Rain barrels provide homeowners with a supplemental water supply during periods of drought. Homeowners who use rain barrels can decrease their water bills up to 30%. It’s a win-win for the community and the homeowner.” Melissa Ranieri, Health Director, Walpole Health Department

A Backyard Solution to Stormwater Management

Stormwater runoff is the rain or melting snow that does not soak into the ground, but instead flows over the land until it reaches storm drains or waterways. As we develop buildings, parking lots, and roads, we create more impervious surfaces that prevent water from soaking into the ground. The more impervious surfaces we have, the more stormwater runoff is created every time it rains. When stormwater flows across the land, it picks up various pollutants such as fertilizers, pesticides, road salts, and sediment and



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carries them into our waterways. Cars emit nitrogen oxides into the air, which eventually fall back onto the land as acid rain. All of these pollutants, including aging septic systems, trigger nitrogen pollution which fuels the growth of algae blooms to take over and pollute a water source. These pollutants impair our waterways and ultimately harm aquatic life and human health.

Rain barrels help protect the environment by reducing stormwater runoff. Rain barrels decrease runoff and allow water to seep back into the ground slowly preventing flooding and erosion. Using a rain barrel, will help you improve water quality by protecting our estuaries, rivers, ponds and ultimately the ocean from the pollution that stormwater creates as it enters these bodies of water.

Conserve Water with a Rain Barrel

- During severe drought, rain barrels can provide an additional source of water
- According to the US EPA, 30% of daily water use is used outdoors. The EPA also states that rain barrels have the ability to save the average homeowner 1300 gallons of water annually. Using the rain barrel's stored water around the landscape saves water resources and reduces the amount of water purchased from municipal sources.

To find out more about the barrels and to participate in The Great American Rain Barrel Program, please visit: www.greatamericanrainbarrel.com/community/ and select your town. Barrels are offered from \$80-\$89 and will be available for pickup on Tuesday, July 11th 5:00-7:00pm at The Town Hall Parking Lot 135 School Street, Walpole MA 02081 Deadline for ordering is July 2nd, Midnight. ###

About the Great American Rain Barrel

The Great American Rain Barrel is a local food importing company that has been repurposing shipping drums into Rain Barrels since 1988. The Great American Rain Barrel Co. has been an approved vendor by the MASS DEP since 2010.
