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### Back to School

As kids head back to school, remember to stay green with these environmentally friendly tips from Put a Little Green In Your Life!

**Ride the bus!** Instead of making special trip to drop the tots off at school, let your kids ride the bus.

**Don't brown-bag it – lunchbox it!** Use a lunchbox and try not to

## Rediscover Bike Riding

Challenge yourself to do something good for the environment AND good for yourself this summer. Rediscover the fun of riding your bike!

### Did you know...

- More than half of all Americans live less than five miles from where they work according to Bicycling magazine.
- Only 1.67% of Americans commute by bicycle (in Japan it's 15%).
- Traffic jams in the 29 major cities cost commuters an estimated \$24.3 billion each year.
- There are approximately 139 million automobiles in the United States (and only about 103 million bicycles).
- One hundred bicycles can be produced for the same energy and resources it takes to build one medium-sized automobile.
- The average cost of a new, quality bicycle in the U.S. is \$385 (and mass retail store varieties can be found for much less), compared to the average car at \$13,532.
- The average number of barrels of oil consumed daily in the United States is 17 million. Driving consumes 43% of those barrels of oil.
- Commuting by bicycle produces zero pollution.
- The number of bicycle commuters doubled between 1983 and 1990, according to the Bicycle Institute of America.

## Rain Barrels Rock

### Start with a drum

Many people make rain barrels out of inexpensive 50-gallon food-

buy lots of pre-packaged convenience foods – those little wrappers sure add up to a lot of trash fast!

**Don't overbuy on your school supplies.** Check over what your kids didn't use up last year. Still have scissors? Paper? Pencils? Are those folders from last year still in good shape? Re-use them this year!



grade drums that were used to carry juices, olives, pickles, etc. Be sure to get a heavy-grade plastic container that won't let in light – clear or translucent barrels can speed the growth of algae. The water savings from using stored rainwater rather than municipal or well water can be substantial over a period of time. A rain barrel can also help reduce the amount of water that may settle around the foundation of your home.

**Uses for collected water**

- Connect to a soaker hose
- Fill a watering can and hand-water flower beds and gardens
- Keep your compost bin moist
- Rinse off gardening tools

**How much rainwater can I collect?**

A typical 1/2-inch rainfall will fill a 50- to 55- gallon barrel. Figure about a half gallon of water per square foot of roof area during a 1-inch rainfall. A 2,000-square-foot roof can collect about 1,000 gallons of water (accounting for about 20% loss from evaporation, runoff and splash).

**What about filtering?**

Use a window screen or wire mesh to keep out debris and insects, and clean the tank periodically to remove any settling.