

Put A Little Green In Your Life

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Rain Barrels Make Sense

Start with a drum

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



Quick Tips

Beat phantom load!

Unplug cell phone chargers, coffeemakers, televisions, and computers when not in use. These appliances consume small amounts of power even when you're not using them! Over time, this can really add up on your utility bill!

Check out Freecycle

Everyone has at least a few items that they don't really want but can't bear to throw away. Freecycle it. Freecycling is giving something to someone who will use it -- for free -- instead of throwing it in the garbage. (To find or start a local group, visit freecycle.org). It's simple: post a message on your local Freecycle group's web site, decide who will get your item, then arrange a pick up time. Members give and get everything from moving boxes to cabinetry.



Keep Your Cool As Weather Heats Up!

At Green Hills we focus a lot on weatherization of your home to help keep you and your family warm in the winter, but "summerizing" your home is just as important to help you keep your cool during the 100+ dog days of summer.

There are many inexpensive steps you can take to keep the cool air in and the hot air out. The most common area for air to penetrate a home is around window and door frames. Plug up those potential air leaks with weatherstripping around the frame and use special door bottom seals for the floor. Pay special attention to the areas around window air conditioning units!



Caulking and sealants are important tools to have in your weatherization arsenal as well. Both can be used to inexpensively fill gaps and cracks in all sorts of surfaces of your home from walls and windows to floors and ceilings.

Another spot warm air can sneak in is around electrical plugs and switches, use a good quality foam insert to cut down on those problem spots. And don't forget to close off your fireplace flue!

If you rarely use some rooms of your house, or don't mind having a warm room or two, thick blankets or heavy curtains hung across the doorways make great insulators. This keeps the cool air where you want it and helps window air conditioner units not have to work quite as hard as they would if cooling off the entire house.

By taking these small, inexpensive steps now toward sealing your home against summer's heat, you can cut those high utility bills down to size before they even start!



Rosemary has calming effects that work against fatigue, sadness, anxiety, calming muscle soreness, digestive pains and also indigestion caused by stress. The wonderful scent and taste of rosemary make it very versatile in the kitchen.

Roasted Veggies with Rosemary

2 – Medium Onions
2 - 3 Celery Ribs
1 lb. Carrots
2 lbs. Potatoes
2 lbs. Sweet Potatoes
1 tbsp. Rosemary
Olive Oil

Clean and remove the outer skins from the Onions and from the other vegetables (as desired). Cut into bite size pieces (+/- 3/4 inch). Place in a covered glass or ceramic baking dish. Sprinkle in the Rosemary and mix well. Roast in oven set at 350 degrees F. for about 45 minutes or until the vegetables are tender. Mix the vegetables every 15 minutes. If you desire the vegetables to be "browned" remove the cover for the last 10-15 minutes and mix every 5 minutes. 3 Before serving, spray on a little Extra Virgin Olive Oil for flavor and mix well.