



## FYN Garden Q & A Series

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### FYN Topic: Rain Barrel Workshops

**Question:** How can I increase the amount of rainwater and pressure in my rain barrel? My neighbor has his connected to a soaker hose. Is it worth collecting rain water during the dry season? I live in a condo complex and wonder if a second floor balcony might work?  
Connie S. Ft Myers

**Answer:** To get started with a rain barrel, attend the Rain Barrel Workshop being offered today at 10AM at Riverside Park in Bonita Springs. A rain barrel can be any container modified to receive and store rainwater. Usually no electricity or pump is needed to distribute the rainwater. A typical, 55 gallon rain barrel fills quickly but will empty fairly slowly with just a soaker hose attached (approx. 24 hours).



The time it takes depends on the hose diameter, the distance to the garden and how far downhill the garden is to the base of the barrel. A ½ inch rainfall collected from just 160 square feet of roof surface fills one 55 gallon barrel. A typical Florida house with a 2000 square foot roof surface would require 12 barrels to store all of the rainwater. Even in the dry season, a light rain or even heavy dew puts water into a rain barrel.

I've seen residents store rainwater on a second-floor balcony. Seasonal residents can then enjoy the benefits of rain water especially when growing vegetables and flowers in pots on a balcony.

You can connect the overflow hose from your "first" rain barrel to a "second" rain barrel to hold twice the volume of rainwater collected at a single downspout. Multiple barrel systems usually have two or three barrels connected together. Or place a single barrel at each downspout to capture the most rainwater from each rainfall event.

### Useful Links

<http://www.floridayards.org>

<http://fyn.ifas.ufl.edu>

<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/>

<http://gardeningsolutions.ifas.ufl.edu>

Thomas Becker is an extension agent for the Florida Yards and Neighborhoods (FYN) program at the Lee County Extension Service. Submit questions by calling the Horticulture Help Desk at 533-7504 between 9 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. or by emailing [Extgardener@leegov.com](mailto:Extgardener@leegov.com). Visit his Web page at <http://lee.ifas.ufl.edu/FYN/FYNHome.shtml>

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