

# RAINWATER HARVESTING MAINTENANCE GUIDELINES

Now that your rain barrel / cistern has been installed, whats next?

## FILTERS

Rainwater harvesting systems allow for the slow and controlled use of stormwater. To ensure that the rainwater harvesting system functions properly, filters must be checked for debris on a regular basis. The rainwater harvesting system contains a diverter filter. The diverter filter serves as a barrier against clogging, directly catching the debris that flows off of the roof and into the downspout. This filter should be regularly checked and cleaned. Failure to clean the diverter filter may cause the rainwater harvesting system to

## OVERFLOW

The overflow pipe allows water to flow out of the rainwater harvesting system when the tank gets too full. This prevents the system from overflowing and backing up through the downspout. To help reduce the amount of water that flows directly into nearby storm drains, direct the overflow so that excess water can be dispersed along a lawn, field, garden, or other planted area. By simply using the water that is stored in your rainwater harvesting system, you can also help prevent water from flowing out of the overflow.



## WINTER

The constant freezing and thawing of water in the winter time can cause many pieces of the rainwater harvesting system to crack and break. Therefore, before the temperature falls below freezing, the rainwater harvesting system should be fully drained and disconnected at the diverter. For a rain barrel, disconnect the downspout from the barrel, place the original downspout onto the gutter, and then turn the barrel upside down.

## USE

The storm water held in the rainwater harvesting system is great for watering trees and gardens. However, it SHOULD NOT be used for bathing or drinking. If the water is to be used for a vegetable garden, it is advised that you water the soil not the vegetables. If concerned, feel free to get the water tested.

## PHOTOGRAPH AND DOCUMENT

Please photograph your green infrastructure practice and share pictures with the Rutgers Cooperative Extension (RCE) Water Resources Program! In addition, document the maintenance of the practice, and be sure to contact RCE Water Resources Program at [water@envsci.rutgers.edu](mailto:water@envsci.rutgers.edu) if you need assistance or have any questions.

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