

# 10. A NO RAINER

## Installing a Rain Barrel or Downspout Extension

### WHY ACT?

Water running off your roof during a rainstorm can be part of the problem—or a resource you can put to good use! On many properties, rooftop rainwater drains onto yards with compacted clay soil or onto hard pavement. In either case, it eventually flows into storm drains and directly into our local streams. Reducing storm water runoff is the first step to reviving life in urban streams. This water action will show you how to divert and store rainwater runoff, so that you can help support aquatic life and reduce stream bank erosion. What's more, rainwater collection can help you save water for use in your yard, eliminate potential flooding in your basement, and reduce storm water management costs.

### WATER ACTION

- Check your gutters and roof drains and remove any leaves or other debris that may block water flow. If leaf accumulation is a recurring problem, consider installing commercial gutter shields.
- If your roof drain downspouts discharge too close to the house, install extensions that carry the water at least six feet away from the foundation to a vegetated area of your yard. Use additional pieces of downspout or open gutters for the extensions. Place a splash block at the end of the extension to spread out the water as it runs onto your lawn. This reduces the potential for soil erosion.
- Consider installing a rain barrel at the end of your downspout to collect rainwater (see Resources for purchase and installation information).
- You can use the rainwater to water plants and shrubs between rainfalls or allow the water to dribble out slowly so your yard can soak it up and recharge the groundwater.

### MATERIALS

Ladder, gloves, and eye protection to wear while cleaning gutters; cistern or rain barrel, connectors, hose for outflow





## TIME

One to six hours, depending on gutter maintenance and size of cistern

## RESOURCES

American Rainwater Catchment Systems Association: [www.arcsa-usa.org](http://www.arcsa-usa.org)

Urban Garden Center: [www.urbangardencenter.com](http://www.urbangardencenter.com)

Rainsaver USA: [www.rainsaverusa.com](http://www.rainsaverusa.com)

## BENEFITS

You reduce the volume of stormwater entering our streams, while creating a source of water for your yard between rainfalls. In addition, since rooftop runoff is a major cause of wet or flooded basements, cisterns and rain barrels are often the most cost-effective way to keep water from entering your basement.

