



An example of a large scale collection system with integrated pumps for irrigation.

## References

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Cooperative Extension;

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of Environmental Protection. 2004.  
Safe Drinking Water Act  
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Jersey Department of Environmental  
Protection;  
[state.nj.us/dep/watersupply/sdwarul  
e.pdf](http://state.nj.us/dep/watersupply/sdwarul<br/>e.pdf).

Demonstration site:

The Hightstown Housing Authority  
131 Rogers Avenue  
Hightstown, NJ 08520  
Contact: [kleprevost@hightstownhousing.org](mailto:kleprevost@hightstownhousing.org)

## Who We Are

### About Us

The Borough of Hightstown Environmental Commission provides materials and education to the residents of Hightstown on a number of environmentally sensitive subjects from recycling to storm water management.

### Contact Us

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The Borough  
of Hightstown  
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*Rainwater Harvesting*

## Collection Vessels

While rainwater can be harvested in a variety of vessels including stone cisterns or open basins, most commonly closed tanks are used. Plastic tanks in a variety of sizes and shapes are available commercially. Plastic tanks for above-ground use should be made from plastic that is resistant to ultraviolet light and opaque in color. For underground use, tanks manufactured for this application should be used. Larger commercially-available tanks are made from fiberglass, galvanized steel, or a variety of other materials when a plastic liner is used. If collection vessels are recycled from other uses, those used to store toxic materials must be avoided. Matrix systems which consist of modular milk-crate-like plastic forms are also available. They are pieced together to provide an underground storage space without the need for a single large open tank. These systems provide flexibility in size and shape of the reservoir area, and can be used where a load-bearing vessel is desired. Pre-packaged and modular systems are available commercially, and some manufacturers have certified contractors for their installation.

A rain barrel is placed under a gutter's downspout next to a house, small sheds or other outdoor structures to collect rain water from the roof. The water can then be used in various ways including to water a garden. A rain barrel provides two important environmental functions:

- harvesting rain water provides an alternative to utilizing the drinking water supply for gardening and other uses, and
  - the overflow from a rain barrel can be directed to a pervious area (an area where rain water can infiltrate into the ground) such as a lawn or garden and help replenish ground water supplies.
- By collecting rain water, homeowners help to reduce flooding and pollution in local streams, rivers, and lakes. When rain water runs off of hard surfaces (also called storm water) like rooftops, roadways, parking lots, and compacted lawns it carries with it pollution to the storm drain system and is then discharged directly to our rivers and lakes. Often in older cities, the storm drain system is combined with the sanitary system. During large rain events the storm water and raw sewage is discharged directly to local waterways.

## For More Information:

Clean Virginia Waterways. (2009) Rain Barrels for Harvesting Rain Water Program, [www.longwood.edu/CLEANVA/rainbarrels.htm](http://www.longwood.edu/CLEANVA/rainbarrels.htm)

Southwest Florida Water Management District. (2008) Rain Barrels – A Homeowner's Guide, [www.swfwmd.state.fl.us/publications/files/rain\\_barrels\\_guide.pdf](http://www.swfwmd.state.fl.us/publications/files/rain_barrels_guide.pdf)

City of Portland Environmental services. How to Manage Stormwater – Rain Barrels, [www.portlandonline.com/shared/cfm/image.cfm?id=182095](http://www.portlandonline.com/shared/cfm/image.cfm?id=182095)

Rutgers Cooperative Extension Water Resources Program, [www.water.rutgers.edu](http://www.water.rutgers.edu)

[www.njstormwater.org](http://www.njstormwater.org).

