



**Nurture Nature Center**, located in Easton, Pennsylvania, created an Urban Garden in a small parking area using recycled and found materials to demonstrate low-cost growing techniques for small urban areas (walls, balconies, small paved spaces). This fact sheet is part of a series that features information about demonstrations in the garden that are easy to replicate and implement in a variety of urban spaces.

## Conserving Water in the Garden

### Description:

Water use has increased dramatically over the past 100 years. Although our planet is 70% water, only about 2.5% is fresh water, and less than 1% of that is accessible to us.

### Don't Let Your Rain Water Run Away

**Collecting water that runs off a roof can help prevent runoff problems even as it helps your garden.** Impervious surfaces like roofs and paved roads cause water to run rapidly into storm drains and sewer systems, sometimes resulting in downstream flooding, streambank erosion, contaminated streams and rivers, and habitat destruction. But storm-water that is absorbed slowly into the ground benefits plants, and replenishes underground aquifers. Some runs into rivers and streams.

Less than ½ inch of rain falling on a 10 x 20 foot section of roof will fill a 50-gallon rain barrel. Place your barrel on a raised platform so that you can easily fill a watering can from the bottom spigot, and add an overflow valve near the top for extreme weather events. For added benefit, direct overflow into a rain garden — a depressed area planted with native, flood tolerant plants such as sedges, Joe Pye Weed, and cardinal flower.



For more information related to Nurture Nature Center's Urban Garden Project, see <http://nurturenaturecenter.org/garden/>

### Resources:

[http://www.globalchange.umich.edu/globalchange2/current/lectures/freshwater\\_supply/freshwater.html](http://www.globalchange.umich.edu/globalchange2/current/lectures/freshwater_supply/freshwater.html)  
<http://www.whitpaintownship.net/pdfs/raingardendesign09.pdf>  
<http://www.epa.gov/region3/p2/make-rainbarrel.pdf>



### Water Saving Tips:

- Water deeply at plants' root zones.
- Water in the morning or evening.
- Mulch to conserve soil moisture.
- Add compost to increase the water-holding capacity of soil.
- Use drip irrigation or soaker hoses, rather than sprinklers.
- Collect rainwater for use in the garden.



Nurture Nature Center  
518 Northampton Street, Easton, PA 18042  
610-253-4432  
[www.nurturenaturecenter.org](http://www.nurturenaturecenter.org)



PENNSTATE  
1855  
Cooperative Extension  
College of Agricultural Sciences



A program of  
CACLV  
Community Action Committee  
of the Lehigh Valley, Inc.