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## More than 11,000 New Yorkers Received a Free Rain Barrel in 2016



Belle Harbor Rain Barrel Giveaway  
by NYC Water

### Rain Barrels Collect Precipitation, Reduce Residential Water Bills, Conserve the City's Water Supply and Help to Protect the Health of Local Waterways

#### Photos from Various Events are Available on [DEP's Flickr Page](#)

The New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) today announced that it distributed a record-setting 11,111 rain barrels to New York City homeowners in 2016. The 60-gallon rain barrels are easy to install and connect directly to a property owner's downspout to capture and store the stormwater that falls on the rooftop. The water collected in the rain barrel can then be used to water lawns and gardens, or for other outdoor chores. Rain barrels can help reduce a homeowner's water bill as watering lawns and gardens can account for up to 40 percent of an average household's water use during the summer months. The rain barrels have the capacity to collect over 600,000 gallons of stormwater each time it rains, keeping it out of the City's sewer system and improving the health of local waterways. Over the last several years, DEP has distributed thousands of rain barrels to New York City homeowners free of charge at events held in conjunction with local elected officials and community organizations. This year's total more than doubles the 5,250 rain barrels given away in 2015.

"The record number of free rain barrels given away this year underscores both the program's importance and success," said **DEP Acting Commissioner Vincent Sapienza**. "Rain barrels are a simple, effective and environmentally-friendly way for New York City homeowners to conserve water, save money on their water bills, and help to reduce street flooding."

**More Information**

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“The addition of DEP rain barrels to Green Thumb gardens across the city enhances the myriad benefits these gardens bring to their communities. Now in addition to providing greenery, fresh food and community engagement, our Green Thumb gardens positively contribute to DEP’s efforts to keep NYC sewers and waterways clean and healthy,” said **NYC Parks Commissioner Mitchell J. Silver, FAICP**.

“Our rain barrel giveaway this year was a resounding success,” said **Staten Island Borough President James Oddo**. “Rain barrels help ease street flooding and keep our storm sewers from overflowing during storms. They also have the added benefit of saving Staten Islanders some money on their water bills by allowing them to conserve water for future use. My office was happy to partner with DEP again on the giveaway this year, and I’m pleased that so many Staten Islanders took this opportunity to get a free rain barrel.”

“Congrats to the team at DEP for distributing a record-setting number of rain barrels this year, and congrats to all of our city’s homeowners who have taken advantage of this free resource in a method that is both addressing our challenges with sewer overflows as well as putting hard-earned dollars back in taxpayers’ wallets,” said **Brooklyn Borough President Eric Adams**. “Water conservation is critical to the long-term environmental health of our borough, and I am proud to support this initiative and others focused on this priority.”

“The Department of Environmental Protection’s rain barrel program is a practical way for homeowners to conserve water and lower their bills. It is also an effective way for the city to reduce runoff and protect our local waterways. I’m proud to have worked with the DEP to distribute rain barrels to my constituents in the Bronx, who will now be able to enjoy the benefits of this program,” said **State Senator Jeff Klein (34<sup>th</sup> Senate District)**.

“I am happy to partner with DEP and bring the Rain Barrel Giveaway program into my community. Early this spring year we had an incredibly successful event and gave away over 200 rain barrels to environmentally conscious Brooklyn residents. This green initiative is wonderful way for NYC to conserve water and reduce sewer overflow during periods of heavy rain,” said **State Senator Martin J. Golden (22<sup>nd</sup> Senate District)**. “I will be coordinating two rain barrel giveaway events with DEP in April of 2017 to continue this water conservation effort. I urge everyone to participate in this important program as NYC becomes a leader among large cities in green initiatives and environmental conservation.”

“The Rain Barrel Program has helped hundreds of homeowners to save money, conserve water and, simultaneously, encouraged gardening and reduced erosion,” said **State Senator Leroy Comrie (14<sup>th</sup> Senate District)**. “The NYC Department of Environmental Protection has gone above and beyond in implementing this program, which is providing a benefit for our district, our environment, and our families. I want to thank Mayor de Blasio and DEP Acting Commissioner Sapienza, and all of the DEP staff that helped facilitate the events in my district. I look forward to continuing to partner on this important initiative in the future.”

“Rain barrels help conserve water and keep overflow out of our sewer system, which helps protect our waterways. Homeowners who install rain barrels can also reduce their water bill. I am proud of the success of DEP’s Rain Barrel Giveaway Program, which has given away a record number of barrels this year,” said **Council Member Costa Constantinides (22<sup>nd</sup> Council District)**, Chair of the Council’s Environmental Protection Committee. “The program encourages environmentally-friendly habits and helps homeowners save money. Now more than ever, we need these simple solutions like these to help our city continue to be global leaders on the environment. Thank you to DEP Acting Commissioner Sapienza for his partnership on making our city greener.”

“With the cost of water soaring, every small way we can help New York City homeowners conserve water helps. The more than 11,000 rain barrels we have helped DEP distribute are having a real impact on water bills, while helping to prevent flooding in our communities and excess runoff into our sewer systems,”

said **Council Minority Leader Steven Matteo (50<sup>th</sup>Council District)**. “I am proud to have co-sponsored rain barrel giveaways this year and encourage more Staten Islanders to participate in this money-saving and environmentally positive program.”

“Rain barrels are simple, useful tools which allow New Yorkers to save money while doing their part to help the environment. Expanding green infrastructure is a significant step in reducing water consumption and creating a more resilient New York City,” said **Council Member Mark Treyger (47<sup>th</sup>Council District)**, Chair of the Council’s Recovery and Resiliency Committee. “I would like to thank DEP for their partnership in promoting this important environmentally-friendly initiative.”

“DEP’s Rain Barrel Giveaway Program has been an effective way of reducing the load on the sewer system in East Elmhurst where we have constantly struggled with overflow,” said Council Member Julissa Ferreras-Copeland (21st Council District), Chair of the Council’s Finance Committee. “Additionally, homeowners have already reported savings in the summer water bills, all while doing their part to protect the environment. I look forward to our continued partnership and to having more homeowners participate in the program.”

“This summer, residents in Southeast Queens once again took advantage of all the opportunities they had to receive a rain barrel,” said **Council Member I. Daneek Miller (27<sup>th</sup>Council District)**, Chair of the Council’s Civil Service & Labor Committee. “This program has allowed homeowners to conserve our environment and help to mitigate flooding in parts of the community. I congratulate DEP Acting Commissioner Vincent Sapienza and his team at the Department of Environmental Protection for this success and look forward to continuing to working with them.”

“We are an environmentally-conscious community. This year, at least two DEP rain barrel giveaways were held for homeowners in the 12<sup>th</sup>Council District and we still have a waiting list!” said **Council Member Andy King (12<sup>th</sup>Council District)**. “The best part of having a rain barrel is the benefits it creates for the environment and the wallet. I commend DEP for its continuation of this very important program as part of the NYC Green Infrastructure Program.”

“We are pleased to be able to give away DEP rain barrels for installation in homes, schools, businesses and community gardens throughout the Gowanus Watershed. As one of many green and grey infrastructure interventions, rain barrels can play an important role in reducing combined sewage overflow, building awareness and making Gowanus Blue,” said **Andrea Parker, Executive Director, Gowanus Canal Conservancy**.

“It was a pleasure to be a part of such a wonderful event that supports APEC’s mission to educate the public about nature and the importance of environmental sustainability,” said **Venus Hall**, an educator at **Alley Pond Environmental Center** in Douglaston, Queens. “Kudos to DEP and our public officials.”

“CB12 jumped at the opportunity to partner with DEP. Free rain barrels are a win-win for the community and environment. We have residents who see value in water conservation and saving some money on their water bills,” said George Torres, District Manager of Bronx Community Board 12.

DEP’s Rain Barrel Giveaway Program is part of New York City’s Green Infrastructure Program that aims to capture stormwater before it can ever enter the sewer system and thereby reduce combined sewer overflows into local waterways. In 2016, 62 rain barrel giveaway events were held: 23 in Brooklyn, 5 in the Bronx, 26 in Queens, and 8 in Staten Island. DEP has committed to invest \$2.4 billion in green infrastructure projects as well as other source controls, such as rain barrels, to significantly reduce combined sewer overflows by 2030.

The rain barrel program also builds upon DEP’s efforts to conserve water as part of a \$1.5 billion initiative to ensure clean, reliable, and safe drinking water for more than nine million New Yorkers for decades to come. As part of this initiative, DEP has begun a project to repair leaks in the Delaware Aqueduct that

supplies roughly half of the city's daily drinking water. In order to complete these repairs to the Aqueduct, the tunnel must be temporarily shut down in 2022. Ahead of the planned shutdown, DEP aims to reduce citywide water consumption by five percent.

In addition to encouraging homeowners to conserve water, DEP is installing activation buttons on spray showers at 400 playgrounds around the city that will save 1.5 million gallons of water a day during the summer months. Work is also underway to install new, high efficiency fixtures in the bathrooms of hundreds of City schools to reduce water consumption by nearly 4 million gallons each school day. And, DEP has partnered with hotels, restaurants and hospitals across the city to reduce water use at these facilities by five percent annually.

Installation of rain barrels is easy and they require little maintenance. Each homeowner who receives a rain barrel is also provided with an installation kit and instructions. Rain barrels should only be used for non-potable purposes, such as gardening, and must be disconnected from the downspout during the winter months to avoid freezing.

DEP manages New York City's water supply, providing more than one billion gallons of water each day to more than nine million residents, including eight million in New York City. The water is delivered from a watershed that extends more than 125 miles from the city, comprising 19 reservoirs and three controlled lakes. Approximately 7,000 miles of water mains, tunnels and aqueducts bring water to homes and businesses throughout the five boroughs, and 7,500 miles of sewer lines and 96 pump stations take wastewater to 14 in-city treatment plants. In addition, DEP has a robust capital program, with nearly \$14 billion in investments planned over the next 10 years that will create up to 3,000 construction-related jobs per year. This capital program is responsible for critical projects like City Water Tunnel No. 3; the Staten Island Bluebelt program, an ecologically sound and cost-effective stormwater management system; the city's Watershed Protection Program, which protects sensitive lands upstate near the city's reservoirs in order to maintain their high water quality; and the installation of more than 820,000 Automated Meter Reading devices, which will allow customers to track their daily water use, more easily manage their accounts and be alerted to potential leaks on their properties. For more information, visit [nyc.gov/dep](http://nyc.gov/dep), like us on [Facebook](#), or follow us on [Twitter](#).

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