

City of Madison: Be a watershed steward, try a new rain barrel, compost bin this fall

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Anyone who wants to help the environment, be a better watershed steward and help improve local waterways could consider using rain barrels and compost bins this fall.

Rainwater harvesting systems, such as rain barrels, collect and store rainfall for later use.

Harvesting rainwater for plants saves money and reduces stormwater run-off into local waterways. Local urban communities contribute an estimated 30 percent of the total amount of phosphorus that enters lakes Mendota, Monona, Waubesa, Kegonsa, and Wingra.

“Composting and using a rain barrel are two simple actions all homeowners can take to help the lakes,” [Clean Lakes Alliance](#) founder and Executive Director James Tye, said. “The more we can reduce phosphorus-rich runoff, the more we can reduce cyanobacteria, or blue-green algae blooms from closing our beaches.”

Compost bins help create nutrient-rich soil by turning yard waste and select food scraps into organic fuel for lawns and gardens.

“By composting food scraps along with your yard waste, you are reducing your waste and helping control the release of methane, which is a harmful greenhouse gas. According to the EPA, methane has 25 times the ability to trap heat in the atmosphere compared to CO₂ over a 100-year period,” Stacie Reece, City of Madison Sustainability Coordinator, said. “The outcome is a nutrient-rich soil

amendment, a triple win.”

Buying on a budget is possible thanks to a local rain barrel and compost bin sale this weekend.

The annual Madison compost and rain barrel sale begins Oct. 10, 2020 at a new location: Garver Feed Mill, 3241 Garver Green, off S. Fair Oaks Avenue near Starkweather Creek. The new location provides easy pick-up and experts will be on hand to answer questions.

Compost bins and 50- and 100-gallon rain barrels with diverters are available at discounted prices. Pre-orders before Oct. 2, 2020, receive an additional \$10 off.

Resources:

[Pre-order online prior to Oct. 2, 2020.](#)

[Rain barrel options](#)

[Rain barrel and compost sale Facebook event](#)

Information regarding traffic flow and how to pick-up your rain barrel will be provided after your pre-order.