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**Q&A Backgrounder**

1. **What is the Rain Barrel Rebate Program?**

A program designed to conserve our water resources. Available on a first-come, first-served basis to Town of Spirit River residents. The program offers a rebate of up to $50.00 per rain barrel, with a maximum of two rebates per utility account for the lifetime of that utility account.

1. **Why should I purchase and install a rain barrel?**

Installing a rain barrel is a smart and environmentally friendly way to conserve water, save money, and support sustainability. By collecting and storing rainwater from your roof, a rain barrel reduces reliance on municipal water for outdoor uses like watering your garden or lawn, which can lower your water bill over time. It also helps reduce stormwater runoff, minimizing pollution in local waterways and mitigating the risk of urban flooding. Additionally, rainwater is free of chemicals like chlorine and fluoride, making it healthier for plants and gardens. A rain barrel provides a backup water source during droughts, water restrictions, or emergencies, increasing self-sufficiency. Many municipalities even offer rebates or incentives for their installation. Overall, investing in a rain barrel is a simple and impactful way to promote water conservation and environmental stewardship.

1. **Is rainwater safe to use in my vegetable garden?**

Rainwater is generally safe to use in your vegetable garden and can be an excellent way to conserve water while nourishing your plants. It is free from the chemicals, such as chlorine and fluoride, commonly found in tap water, which makes it gentler on plants. However, there are a few precautions to keep in mind. Rainwater collected from roofs can sometimes contain contaminants like bird droppings, debris, or residue from roofing materials. To ensure safety, use a rain barrel with a secure lid and a fine mesh screen to filter out debris. It’s also advisable to avoid watering the edible parts of your plants directly with rainwater collected from potentially contaminated surfaces; instead, water the soil around the plants to minimize any risk. Additionally, ensure the barrel and any collection system are cleaned regularly to prevent the buildup of harmful bacteria. Following these precautions, rainwater can be a safe and sustainable resource for growing a healthy vegetable garden.

1. **How much do rain barrels cost?**

Rain barrels range in cost from around $60 to $300.

1. **Where can I purchase a rain barrel?**

Rain barrels are available at Home Hardware in Spirit River and at most home and garden centres.

1. **What are the qualifications for the Rain Barrel Rebate Program?**

The following criteria must be met to receive a rebate:

* Must have a Town of Spirit River utility (water bill) account.
* A copy of the receipt of your rain barrel purchase must be included with the application form. The receipt must clearly indicate the name of the store, product name, price and date of purchase. Your name must be clearly written on the receipt.
* Rain barrel must be purchased in the current calendar year.
* Rain barrel must be new.
* Rain barrel must be installed and operated at a property located in the Town of Spirit River.
* Maximum two (2) rebates per utility account.
* Applications are received by October 31.

Please note that funding is limited and rebates are provided on a first-come, first-served basis. The program runs until October 31. Applications received after October 31 will not be processed.

1. **What can’t I receive a rebate for a rain barrel that was purchased last year?**

There is a limited annual budget. Each year has its own budget and we want to ensure that as many residents have the opportunity to participate as possible.

1. **How do I apply for a rebate?**

Applications can be submitted to [clerk@townofspiritriver.ca](mailto:clerk@townofspiritriver.ca).

1. **Can I purchase my rain barrel online?**

Purchases made through classified ads do not qualify; however, purchases through online retailers, such as Amazon.ca, are permitted, provided a receipt is attached to the application form.

1. **Can residents who don’t have a utility account apply?**

No. Only utility account holders may apply. The name of the applicant must match the name associated with the utility account.

1. **Do I need a permit to install a rain barrel?**

No, you do not need a permit. You are encouraged to review the information at [www.townofspiritriver.ca/rainbarrels](http://www.townofspiritriver.ca/rainbarrels) for proper care, installation and maintenance of your rain barrel.

1. **How many rain barrel rebates can I get?**

Maximum two (2) rebates per utility account is permitted.

1. **How long will it take for my rebate to be processed?**

A credit will be applied to your utility account within 8 – 12 weeks.

1. **Can I have the money instead of a credit on my account?**

No. There is no cash back option.

1. **What happens if my rain barrel breaks?**

The Town is not held responsible for the quality of the rain barrel and does not provide additional rebates in the case of a rain barrel breaking. Contact your retailer for warranty information.

1. **Where can I find more information on this?**

For more information and to apply to the Rain Barrel Rebate Program, visit [www.townofspiritriver.ca/rainbarrels](http://www.townofspiritriver.ca/rainbarrels) or call the Administration Office at 780-864-3998.