

# rainwater harvesting

SAN FRANCISCO PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

Thank you for participating in the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission's (SFPUC's) Rainwater Harvesting Program! Please take a moment to review this flier - it contains important information about your rain barrel or cistern.

## Benefits of Rainwater Harvesting

When you install a rainwater harvesting system at home, you are helping to maintain the health and beauty of San Francisco's urban watersheds in many ways. By harvesting rainwater you:

- ◆ Keep relatively clean water out of the sewer system and make it available for use;
- ◆ Reduce the energy and chemicals needed to treat stormwater in San Francisco's wastewater plants, and the energy expended transporting water from far away;
- ◆ Reduce the volume and peak flows of stormwater entering the sewer, thereby helping to reduce flooding and combined sewer discharges;
- ◆ Reduce the volume of potable water used for non-potable applications such as irrigation;
- ◆ Diversify San Francisco's water portfolio.

## Installation Requirements

- ◆ Install your rain barrel(s) or cistern(s) in a flat, shady area.
- ◆ Direct system overflow (i.e. excess rainwater) to either an approved area drain with an air gap or a rain garden.
- ◆ For seismic safety, strap your rain barrel(s) to a wall with three metal straps. The third strap is to be secured directly across the middle of the rain barrel.
- ◆ Apply rainwater harvesting safety labels. Free labels can be obtained in the SFPUC lobby at 1155 Market Street (at 8th Street).
- ◆ Please comply with all federal, state, and local regulations regarding the installation of your barrel.



The installation and maintenance of rainwater harvesting systems is the sole responsibility of the owner and not of SFPUC or the Urban Farmer Store.



### **Permitting**

The SFPUC and the Department of Building Inspection (DBI) are working together to determine the permitting process for rain barrels. In some cases permits may not be needed while in other cases they will be required.

Contact the Plumbing Inspection Division within the Department of Building Inspection to learn more about rain barrel and cistern requirements and to begin the permitting process. More information can be found at: [www.sfgov.org/dbi](http://www.sfgov.org/dbi); by phone (415/558-6088) between 7:30 am and 5:00 pm, Monday through Friday; or in person at 1660 Mission Street, Third Floor, Front Desk.

### **Share Your Rainwater Harvesting Installation**

The SFPUC Urban Watershed Management Program would like to create a photo album of all of the rain barrel installations in San Francisco to post online. Please e-mail a digital photo of your installed rain barrel to [greenstormwater@sflower.org](mailto:greenstormwater@sflower.org) or mail a hard copy to Kenya Briggs (see address below).

To learn more about our programs, or to become a fan of SF Urban Watersheds on Facebook, visit our website at: <http://stormwater.sflower.org>. For more information, please contact:

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