

## Resources cont.

### Grants and Funding Assistance

**Blue Water Baltimore** provides \$0.50 per gallon rebates up to \$2,000 for households and \$6,000 for institutions as part of their Water Audit Program.

**Parks and People** provides a *Neighborhood Greening Grant* that can fund up to \$1,000 for vacant lot clean-up and restoration projects by community-based groups. A supplemental \$250 can be added to an existing *Neighborhood Greening Grant* application for smaller water cleaning as part of the *Clean Water Mini Grant* program.

**Chesapeake Bay Trust's** *Community Engagement and Restoration Mini Grant* provides up to \$5,000 for bay restoration projects from non-profits, community associations, public agencies, schools, and more.

**Baltimore Gas and Electric (BGE)** hosts a *Green Grant* program provides \$500 to \$1000 for any 501c (3) with a Board of Directors for projects that fit in one of five environmental focus areas. This includes conservation and community engagement.

### Contacts/Links

Blue Water Baltimore Cistern Rebate  
John Marra: [jmarra@BlueWaterBaltimore.org](mailto:jmarra@BlueWaterBaltimore.org)

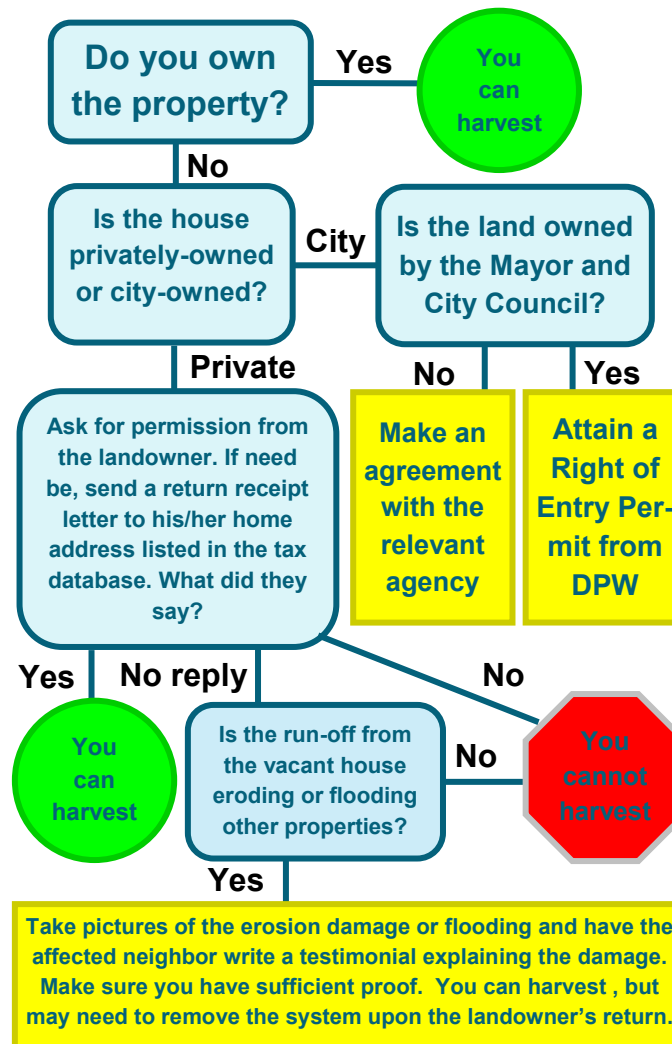
Parks and People Green Grant  
Valerie Rupp:  
[Valerie.rupp@parksandpeople.org](mailto:Valerie.rupp@parksandpeople.org)

Chesapeake Bay Trust Mini Grant  
Kacey Wetzel: [kwetzel@cbt.org](mailto:kwetzel@cbt.org)

BGE Green Grant  
<http://www.bge.com/ourcommitments/community/pages/bge-green-grants.aspx>

## RWH on Vacant Land?

There is some interest from farms and gardens to harvest rainwater from vacant houses. Since ownership of different properties varies, the process to legally access this land, if possible, varies by house. Follow this flow-chart to find out whether it is possible to harvest rainwater on vacant houses, and if so, what steps need to be taken.



# Rainwater Harvesting in Baltimore City

A guide to understanding the benefits, risk, and resources to creating a rainwater harvesting system for your farm and garden





## What is RWH?

Rainwater harvesting (RWH) is the process of collecting stormwater run-off from a roof or other surface. This rainwater can be used for several purposes including watering a farm or garden. Typically, these systems involve connecting a downspout from a roof to a rain barrel or cistern for storage.

## Benefits for Growers

There are many ways a farm or garden can benefit from collecting rainwater. Some of these include:

- Reduced mainline water use and water bill
- Less stormwater pollution entering the bay
- No basic additives to rainwater like chlorine
- Onsite flood management
- Stormwater Tax credit\*
- Increased self-reliance

In some cases, harvested rainwater may be the only convenient and affordable source of water for a farm or garden that is not located close to a water meter.

\*Requires at least 400 gallon system to collect from residential site with an 800+ sq. ft. roof

## Is RWH right for you?

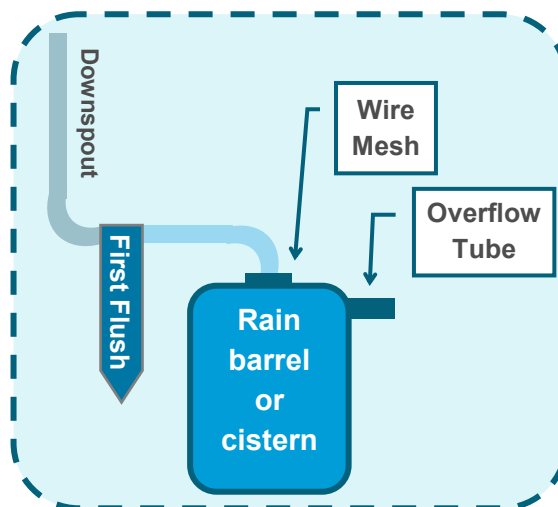
While there are many benefits to RWH, there are also many risks. RWH systems often take many years to pay for themselves, so they should be installed with a long-term purpose in mind. In addition, harvested rainwater will not likely provide enough water at all times of the year for larger gardens, since rain is sporadic. Most importantly, when watering edibles, certain steps should be taken to ensure that roof contaminants do not enter soils or food.

## What to include in a system

Each system should include an overflow tube, that ensures excess rainwater does not pool around collection area. A thin mesh that prevents mosquitoes from entering and breeding in water should be installed.

Also, if edibles are being watered, it is recommended that a first flush diverter is installed. This system prevents contamination from the first few centimeters of rain from being collected

Finally, while not part of the system, an alternative source of water should be available, just in case.



## Resources

There are several existing resources in the city for farms and gardens to learn about and fund RWH systems.

## Education and Installation

**Blue Water Baltimore** hosts workshops the first weekend of each month in the growing season to teach residents about rain barrels. Residents can pay \$94.34 for pre-built barrels or \$68.90 for rain barrel materials that are constructed at workshops. In both cases, Blue Water Baltimore will install rain barrels on a residential property at no cost. They can also assist with larger system installations on for privately-owned land or schools.

**Parks and People's Community Greening Resource Network** also hosts workshops on the stormwater fee, where community gardeners can learn more about RWH.

Two local companies that large-scale RWH systems include **Conservation Technologies** and **Symbiosis Design/Build**

## Contacts

Blue Water Baltimore  
(410) 254-1577  
[www.bluewaterbaltimore.org](http://www.bluewaterbaltimore.org)

Community Greening Resource Network  
(410) 448-5663 ext. 128  
<http://www.parksandpeople.org/greening/resource-network/>

Symbiosis Design/Build  
<http://www.symbiosisdesignbuild.com/>

Conservation Technology  
<http://www.conservationtechnology.com/>