Community Project Toolkit: Rainbarrel Distribution
Community Project Toolkit:
Rainbarrel Distribution
Who We Are

**TreePeople**

TreePeople inspires and supports the people of LA to come together to plant and care for trees, harvest the rain, and renew depleted landscapes. We unite with communities to grow a greener, shadier and more water-secure city at homes, neighborhoods, schools and in the local mountains. We work with volunteer and community leaders using our unique Citizen Forester model, and we influence government agencies for a healthy, thriving Los Angeles.

The Drought and Lessons from Australia

During this time of drought it is important to relook at how we value water, lessons we can learn, and ways to use water wisely. In 2014 TreePeople led a delegation of top policymakers from local, state and federal levels to Australia. The group experienced the innovative approaches that can be transferred to California to ensure that our water is managed in the most efficient, sustainable way first-hand. We are currently translating these solutions for widespread implementation in the Southern California region.

Community Involvement

Communities played a key role in Australia’s ability to be resilient during the drought. Leading a TreePeople project is a rewarding way to positively affect the neighborhood and support a resilient community. Our Citizen Forester model gives ordinary people the extraordinary ability to improve their environment by planting and caring for trees and incorporating “forest-mimicking” technologies into their urban landscape. This work will grow for decades and inspire countless others – helping to ensure a sustainable community working together to create positive change.

TreePeople Community Project Toolkits

Community Project Toolkits are designed to guide users through the process of developing and implementing a community project. It is organized around a timeline to follow and steps to take that culminate with a community project/event. It also provides guidance on promotion, volunteers, evaluation, and recommended tools and resources to support the process.

Our Mission

TreePeople’s mission is to inspire, engage and support people to take personal responsibility for the urban environment, making it safe, healthy, fun and sustainable and to share the process as a model for the world.
Community Distribution: Rain Barrels

How it Works
TreePeople partners with Rain Barrels International to provide a “Truckload Event” in your community. Community members interested in purchasing a rain barrel register and pay online through Rain Barrels International’s website and pick up their barrels at the scheduled event. A Truckload Event can happen at an on-going event such as a Farmer’s Market, part of an upcoming planned event/workshop, or as a stand-alone event.

Why a Rain Barrel Distribution?
The barrels retail for $130 - $160 at local stores. Truckload events/distributions are a way for the community to buy directly from the manufacturer for only $85. To do this, they must be paid for on-line prior to the event. A truckload event works best when everyone pre-orders. However, depending on the number of interested customers, sometimes there are extra barrels that can be sold on a first-come, first-served basis on the day of the distribution.

City of Los Angeles Rebate
The Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP), in conjunction with the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (MWD), offer the SoCal WaterSmart Rebate Program, a residential water conservation program for residential. Many other municipalities offer similar incentives. Go to page 6 for more information.

Through this program, LADWP customers can receive up to 4 rain barrels at no cost.

TreePeople’s Role:
• Act as liason with Rain Barrels International.
• Provide support, as needed, on distribution event set-up and production.
• Provide educational materials for the public, including How-to’s on rain barrel installation and maintenance.
• Advertise the event through the TreePeople website.

Community Group’s Role:
• Provide leadership in setting up and running the event.
• Ensure a minimum of 50 rain barrels are pre-sold to receive the bulk wholesale pricing.
• Promote the event in the community.

Rain Barrel International’s Role:
• Provide rain barrels on the pre-scheduled day of the truckload event.
• Provide necessary information for easy rain barrel sign-up.
• Advertise the event through the Rain Barrel International website.
Preparation Checklist & Timeline

Use the following checklist to plan and complete the first steps. Once a date is set, use the timeline to complete the necessary tasks needed to ensure a successful event.

Checklist

Choose a location
- Large enough so that cars/trucks can come and go for loading.
- Able to accommodate a large U-Haul van (holding the rain barrels).
- Events can not be held on public streets unless the street is closed to traffic and there is a plan that allows cars to load barrels and drive away safely. This must be approved by TreePeople in advance.
- Venues for evening events must be well lit for public safety.

Choose a date
- Weekend events are the most popular. Week day events, especially in the evening, can also be very successful.
- Determine if it makes sense for the distribution to be part of another event on the calendar such as a Farmer’s Market or Street Fair.
- Check with the local community to ensure there are no other events happening.
- If held on a campus, check with school administration to ensure the date is available and can be reserved.
- Avoid local holidays or religious observances.
- Plan back-up dates in case the date is unavailable with Rain Barrels International.

Choose a time
- Plan to have the event open to the public for 2 hours. Typically, the best hours are 9 - 11am; 1 - 3pm; 2 - 4pm; 6 - 8pm or 7 - 9pm.
- Include time for set-up and breakdown.

Create a Fundraiser

A rain barrel distribution/truckload event can be used as a fundraiser for schools and 501(c)3 organizations.
- By charging more for each barrel, the extra cash goes to the school or non-profit organization.
- This must be arranged in advance with Rain Barrels International.
Get Permission

- Depending on where it is located, make sure you have permission from the owner if on private property, city if on public property, and principal if on a school site.

Secure Materials

- Check that at least 1 or more 6’ tables are available for use.
- If needed, consider renting or getting a table for use at the local Councilmember’s office.
- Check that at least 1 or 2 tents or pop up canopies are available for use if there is no shaded area for folks manning the tables.
- Arrange to have TreePeople educational materials at the event.
- See page 3 for list of materials needed.
Create an Event

A rain barrel distribution can be a great platform to invite others to share what they do by providing outreach tables.

- Invite local non-profits to share their materials.
- Invite local campus clubs to pass out information.
- Highlight or advertise other sustainability projects happening in the community.

Supply List

- 1 - 2 tables
  - If not readily available, check with the local Council District office
- 1 – 2 shade tents, if needed
- Directional and informational signage

Timeline

It takes 2 to 3 months to plan and produce a community distribution event. Once you have chosen a date for the distribution, work backwards.

8 - 10 Weeks Before the Event

- Secure the date with TreePeople/Rain Barrels International. Dates book up quickly so the sooner this happens, the better.
- Look for and secure a location.
- Evaluate the site and ensure it will work for the distribution. (See page 1).
- Present the rain barrel truckload event plan to key stakeholders to get permission, if needed.
- Work with TreePeople to see if they can support promotion.

4 - 6 Weeks Before the Event

- Create a promotion plan, including fliers for distribution (See page 5).
- Write an ad or other promotional information for twitter/Facebook/email blast, and more. (See page 5).
- Begin promotion of the event to get as many barrels distributed to your community as possible. Typical events average 150 barrels.
- If needed, secure tables and a tent for use (see sidebar).
- Solicit local non-profits to have an outreach booth at the event, if desired.
- Conduct volunteer training on how to educate the public about rain barrels (see Frequently Asked Questions and educational handouts in Resource section on page 8).

1 Week Before the Event

- Coordinate with the contact person at your location about entry time, getting keys, on-site route for U-Haul rain barrel truck, etc.
- Determine set up, including where the U-Haul truck(s) will be located.
- Create signage (see page 5).
- Continue promotion.
Arrange for TreePeople educational materials (see page 10).
Track the number of barrels and increase promotion if necessary.

2 Days Before the Event
Get supplies together including tables.

Event Day!
Remember to take pictures. TreePeople would love to have pictures and stories shared on their Instagram, Facebook and Twitter accounts.
Have fun and enjoy the event!

After the Event
Return tables.
Send thank you note to site host.
Send thank you notes to any partners, non-profits and clubs that participated.
Complete an evaluation of the event (see page 7).

Social Media
Remember to share the excitement of the distribution event on social media.
• Use the following to share with TreePeople:
  Instagram: @TreePeoplela
  Twitter: @TreePeople_org
Promotion

The majority of the rain barrels must be purchased in advance (a minimum of 50 barrels) so promotion is imperative. Create a promotion plan for reaching the largest audience possible for the distribution, and ensure the minimum barrel purchase.

To assist with this, Rain Barrels International will:

- List the date of the event on their website.
- Provide a sample flier (see page 11).

Consider the following when creating a plan:

**Who do you want to reach in the community?**
- Who is your audience?
- Will some materials need to be in another language?

**What do you want to communicate?**
- The drought and reasons for rain water harvesting
- Date, time and location
- Cost of rain barrel (before and after rebate)
- Details for purchasing
- Rebate information
- Any additional activities happening, such as drives, etc.
- Phone number or email for more information (optional)

**How do you want to communicate?**
- Create and send ads
  - Local newsletters
  - Local newspapers
  - Radio stations
- Create and distribute fliers
  - Community centers
  - Local businesses
- Social media
  - Online blogs and newsletters
  - Facebook Event
  - Twitter

---

**Signage**

Consider the following:

- Large, easy to read lettering
- **Directional signage**
  - If the rain barrel distribution is part of another event.
  - Directional signs should be placed in places that allow people to keep moving toward the destination with placement at key junctions.
- **Identification signage**
  - Signage and/or banners located at the distribution site are used to ensure that people know they have arrived!
- **Informational signage**
  - These give key information that can be easily read and saves having to answer questions.
  - For example, listing the time, a website for additional information, and date for another distribution.
Using Municipal Rain Barrel Rebates

Municipal rebates are a great incentive to encourage the purchase and installation of rain barrels. In some areas, such as those offered in partnership with the Metropolitan Water District and SoCal Water$mart, this works out to be a completely reimbursed purchase – a free rain barrel!

• Find out if your City has a program by going to their website or the water utility website and look for “rebates”.
• If so, be sure to include this information on your flier and other promotional information.
• Become familiar with the qualifications and necessary steps to receive a rebate, to better educate your audience.
• MWD/DWP: up to $100 per barrel, up to 4 barrels per property.

How to apply through the MWD Program

All SoCal Water$mart Program rain barrel rebate applications must be submitted online. Once the rain barrel is purchased:
• Go to http://socalwatersmart.com/
• Select “rain barrels” at the bottom of the page.
• Select “Get Your Rebate Here” in the upper right hand box.
• Submit the SoCal Water$mart Rebate Program application online.
• Mail a print out of the online confirmation page, sales receipt or invoice from Rain Barrels International (with brand, model, and price of the rain barrel), and a copy of your LADWP water bill to the SoCal Water$mart Rebate Program at the address listed on the application.

Receiving the Rebate

• Funds are available on a first-come, first-served basis.
• Limited to one rebate application per product category, per address. Repeat purchases are not eligible for additional rebate payments.
• Rebates are available only to the LADWP customer of record who is listed on the LADWP bill.

Promoting the Rebate

• Add rebate information to promotional materials.
Evaluation & Next Steps

Once the Distribution is complete, answer the following questions with the team to evaluate the event and introduce some possible next steps.

1. What was the most successful part of the event?
2. What was the least successful?
3. What would you do differently next time?
4. Are you interested in another Community Project Toolkit? Consider:
   - Shade Tree Distribution
   - Mulch Distribution
   - Renters/Rental Property Sustainability
   - Tree ID and Mapping
5. Are you interested in setting up a community workshop? Consider:
   - Rain Water Harvesting
   - Native Plants and Turf Reduction
   - Community Tree Care Team Training
   - Citizen Forestry: Tree Planting and Care

Keep Involved!

Continue to bring sustainable solutions to your community!

Contact your TreePeople Community Education Manager or go to: sustainablesolutions@treepeople.org.

MAKE IT COUNT THROUGH TREEMAPLA!

Using TreeMapLA, concerned citizens installing rain water harvesting devices can learn, communicate, and take action on behalf of the environment around us.

- Using this County-wide map, by registering and mapping the location of installed rain barrels, community members can measure the environmental benefits they provide including stormwater runoff reduced and water conserved.
- Postcards with information about TreeMapLA are available for the Distribution event to pass out to rain barrel recipients. Arrange to get these from your TreePeople contact.
- Go to www.treemapla.org for more information.
Resources

Frequently Asked Questions

What are the details about rain barrels from Rain Barrels International?

They are:

• Recycled food grade barrels that are purchased before they are disposed of into landfills.
• 55 to 60 gallon capacity (gallon capacity depends on the style of barrels in stock).
• Designed with brass spigot for garden hose attachment.
• Have a screen to prevent mosquitoes from accessing water.
• Have a side brass overflow fixture.
• Available in black and terra cotta colors.

What are the benefits of a rain barrel?

They:

• Help combat drought and flooding.
• Provide oxygenated, un-chlorinated water ideal for plants.
• Divert water from the municipal storm drain system.
• Help protect rivers and the ocean from runoff pollution.
• Conserve a vital natural resource.
• Help save money on the water bill.

Why does the barrel need to be raised?

• Gravity flows down hill and if the barrel is placed higher the water will drain out faster.
• Raising the barrel also permits easier attachment of a hose to the faucet and placement of a bucket.
Is rain barrel water drinkable?
- No, rain barrel water should be used for watering plants only.

What is the purpose of the overflow feature?
- In an average rain, the barrel will fill very quickly. The overflow allows a garden hose to be connected to the barrel to assist in draining the excess water away from the foundation of your property.
- Overflow should be directed to a permeable (garden area) if possible, or routed off property as a last resort.

Can rain barrels be connected together?
- Yes! See the TreePeople “How-to” on how to connect two or more barrels to one another: http://bit.ly/1LDpRIY

How much water can I save?
- When rainwater is directed into a rain barrel even 1/10 inch of rain can collect up to 63 gallons of water (off of an average 1000 sq. ft roof). Last year’s 7” of rain would yield 4 thousand gallons of water!

What is the warranty on the product?
- Replacement of Product is guaranteed for 30 days from date of retail purchase with a receipt.
- Damages caused by negligence/abuse is not covered.
- The water is for non-potable use only.
- Lids must be closed tightly to avoid danger to children or animals.
Printable Hand-outs

The following How-to’s are available for printing out and distributing at the Rain Barrel Distribution Event:

In English:
• How to Install a Rain Barrel
  http://bit.ly/1F1AlIr

• How to Maintain a Rain Barrel
  http://bit.ly/1JHHlR4

• How to Determine the Number of Rain Barrels to Install
  http://bit.ly/1PBj04i

• How to Connect Rain Barrels

In Spanish:
• Cómo instalar un barril de lluvia
  http://bit.ly/1Ft68Fm

• Cómo mantener un barril de lluvia
  http://bit.ly/1F6mKjL

• Cómo determinar la cantidad de barriles de lluvia que se deben instalar
  http://bit.ly/1SoOFVi

Sample Flier

A sample flier is located on the Rain Barrels International site:
http://bit.ly/1F6BfUO