1. Why save rain?
It's a good idea that is beneficial for the environment. It helps ease Columbia City's storm water overflow problems, decreases demand on municipal water, and helps to prevent rain from becoming polluted storm water. Rain itself does not contain chemicals added by the city system, or leaching from old pipes but is naturally soft, oxygenated and pH neutral.

2. How much rain falls off my roof and how much can I harvest?
If it rains 1/2 an inch in one day, a 1,000 sq. ft. roof will yield 315 gallons of water. The average house hold receives about 24,000 Gal. of rain a year. As for harvesting rainwater, that depends on how many downspouts you connect to and how many rain harvesting systems you have. To give you an idea, a half inch of rain collected from just a 300 ft^2 section of roof will fill a 55-60 gallon rain barrel.

3. Is saving water in a few barrels really going to make a difference?
You have to think about the big picture here. If 1/2 of everyone in Columbia City collected and used a single barrel of water, we would have conserved upwards of 100,000 gallons. Each and every barrel contributes some impact on storm water runoff especially if you incorporate rain gardens with your barrels and manage the water coming from your downspouts.

4. How quickly will my Rain Barrel fill up?
Pretty darn quick! A half inch of rain collected from just a 300 ft^2 section of roof will fill a 55 gallon rain barrel.

5. Can I leave the Rain Barrel out during the winter?
Yes, but we suggest that you empty the barrel during a cold snap. The barrel is fairly durable being made from high density polyethylene but the brass spigot and/or the PVC plumbing will not hold up to freezing weather very well and more than likely, will crack.

6. Can I use my rain water to water my lawn?
Sure, but you will need a large capacity rain harvesting system and a large surface area to capture the rain. A typical lawn requires about 3,000 Gal. a month. However, rain barrels should be used to augment your watering needs. A recommendation before going with big tanks to water your lawn is to look at ways to reduce your outdoor water consumption. Planting native vegetation and drought hearty plants, while also using drip irrigation, will greatly reduce your water consumption.

7. What do I need to know about maintaining my Rain Barrel?
Before and after you set up your Rain Barrel make sure that the gutters are fairly clean. Leaves and pine needles won't clog the diverter but decomposed organic matter will. How well you maintain your gutters will impact the degree of performance of your system as well as reflect on how often you should clean the inside of your barrel. The interior of the barrel should be cleaned every 2-3 years with a long handled brush. Using a mixture of vinegar and water, or a light bleach and water solution; scrub the interior of the barrel’s walls and bottom with the brush.

8. What is the best method to Draw-Out the collected Rain water from my Barrel?
That would be through drip irrigation. It is the most effective way to water, because the water is delivered right to the roots of the plants where it can be slowly absorbed into the soil. This reduces runoff and spreads the water out into the soil better promoting root growth. Water is also not lost due to evaporation. To ensure enough pressure to move the water through the drip system, your Barrel needs to be elevated at least two feet to maintain it when the barrel is less than full.

9. Why is it important to manage my storm water?
When it rains, storm water flows from roofs, roads, parking lots, and other hard surfaces. This storm water runoff contributes to stream pollution and habitat destruction, and costs the city millions of dollars. By properly self-managing storm water on your property, you help to mimic nature and reduce storm water's damaging effects.

10. What are some of the ways to manage storm water on my property?
Direct the storm water from disconnected downspouts and rain barrel over-flows on to pervious areas, such as rain gardens, porous pavement, vegetated swales, filter strips and pocket wetlands.