

## **USDA-CSREES 2007 National Water Quality Conference**

### **Raised Bed Gardens and Rain Storage Basins**

Gardening is a favorite pastime for many Americans. However, having a garden often results in increased water use, especially during dry seasons when water can be in short supply. Raised bed and container gardens use less water, space, time, and money than traditional row gardens. These gardens can be watered with rainwater collected in rain barrels. One inch of rainwater on a 1000 square foot roof can result in 623 gallons of water. In 2005 and 2006 the University of Kentucky Environmental and Natural Resource Issues (ENRI) Task Force offered trainings to educate extension agents and other natural resource professionals on gardening techniques that conserve water. The trainings focused on raised bed gardens and rain storage basins. At each training participants had the opportunity to construct a raised bed garden. At the first training participants constructed a tire tower garden using old tires, crushed milk cartons, soil mix, and mulch. At the second training participants built a wooden raised bed garden using untreated lumber, newspaper, compost, vermiculite, and peat moss. Participants also learned how to construct and use a rain barrel to conserve rainwater and reduce stormwater runoff. In addition, participants created a worm bin and learned the importance of composting. To assist extension agents and other natural resource professionals, the ENRI Task Force developed a web site ([www.ca.uky.edu/ENRI/gardening.htm](http://www.ca.uky.edu/ENRI/gardening.htm)) which houses information and resources related to raised bed gardens and rain storage basins. Several agents in Kentucky have incorporated these water saving gardening techniques in their programming.

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