

THE HARVEST OF RAIN

“Rain rain, go away, come again another day.” “I hate rainy days.” How many times have the best picnic plans went awry because of darkening skies and the forecast of rain?

Personally, I don't mind rainy days, as it is a good time to stay inside and curl up with a good book. Plus, it is quite easy to fall asleep listening to the steady dripping of the rain.

When I was young, I remember that we had a big wooden barrel which was placed under the roof spouting. The rain would run down and fall into the “rain” barrel and we saved that water and used it for various reasons.

My grandma had long hair which came down to the middle of her back. She always wore it in a bun when she went to town or to church. However, when she was at home, she always wore one pigtail down her back.

I always loved her long wavy hair and it always felt so soft. She used to take a bucket of rainwater, heat it on the stove and wash her hair. She swore that rainwater was what made her hair so soft. I believe that it is probably a great softener, but there is no proven fact that it is.

They say not to cook with rainwater due to the acid rain problem, but we always cooked ham and beans in water from our rain barrel. I don't know why, it was just one of Grandma's beliefs. (Maybe it took out the gassiness.)

Did you know that in Colorado, you cannot have a rain barrel and “harvest” rain? One resident, Kris Holstrom, knowingly breaks the law each time it rains because she has 55-gallon buckets underneath the gutters of her farmhouse on a mesa 15 miles from the resort town of Telluride.

Holstrom uses this water to irrigate a small vegetable garden she and her husband maintain. By doing this, they are breaking the law.

According to Colorado state law, the rain that falls on property is not anyone's to keep. It should be allowed to fall to the ground and flow unimpeded into surrounding creeks and streams, the law states, to become the property of farmers, ranchers, developers and water agencies who have bought the rights to those waterways.

The practice of rainwater harvesting dates back to the dawn of civilization and is increasingly in vogue among environmentalists and others who pursue sustainable lifestyles.

"If you try to collect rainwater that water really belongs to someone else," said Doug Kemper, executive director of the Colorado Water Congress. "We get into a very detailed accounting on every little drop."

We are fortunate to live in a state that has not prohibited us from harvesting rainwater. I remember different times through the years when summers were very hot and we went days without getting a good rain.

When it did finally rain, I remember going outside and dancing around and not even caring if my hair or clothes got drenched. A good rain always felt good. (I still love doing that today.)

One bit of information I did find out about rain is that there are over 700 songs written about the rain. Some of them are:

- "Singin' In the Rain"

- "Kentucky Rain"

- “Rainy Days and Mondays”
- “I Love a Rainy Night”
- “Purple Rain”
- “Blue Eyes Crying In the Rain”
- “Raindrops Keep Falling On My Head”
- “It Ain’t Gonna Rain No More.”

Today is a bright sunny day without a cloud in the sky. There is not a forecast of rain, but we know that it will be coming. Do I appreciate the rain? Of course I do. I am seriously thinking of getting me a rain barrel.

Here is one of my favorite quotes about rain, “Let the rain kiss you. Let the rain beat upon your head with silver liquid drops. Let the rain sing you a lullaby.” Langston Hughes

Aren’t you happy we can harvest water? Have you ever had a rain barrel? Have you ever washed your hair in rainwater? Let me know and I’ll give you a Penny for Your Thoughts.