

## Fire Up the Grill

Summertime is grilling time. And when temperatures rise, cooking outside is a more energy-efficient and enjoyable option than staying indoors. If you're in the market for a new grill, consider the benefits of a natural gas model.

Rather than burning through tanks of propane or bags of charcoal, natural gas grilling simply requires a hookup to your natural gas line. Plus, natural gas is more environmentally friendly and burns cleaner than other options—and it costs as little as a third of the price of propane per BTU.

When shopping for a natural gas grill, consider the types of food you'll cook and the amount of grilling you'll do to ensure that you purchase the most efficient grill for your needs. For instance, if you only grill a couple of burgers or brats at a time, a two-burner grill should do the trick. If you regularly entertain and cook for big crowds, a larger grill ensures you aren't cooking for hours.

If you'd like the convenience of natural gas grilling but currently have a propane grill, you can purchase a conversion kit that allows you to make the switch in only a few minutes. Just remember—if you don't already have a gas line accessible from your deck or patio, you will need to contact your local gas company to find a certified contractor who can install one for you.

try this  
today—

**Fix your leaky faucet.** A single drippy bathroom faucet can waste up to 20 gallons of water a day. Fortunately, you can tackle repairing or replacing a faucet yourself. For step-by-step instructions, visit [www.thisoldhouse.com](http://www.thisoldhouse.com) and search for "leaky faucet."

## Ready for A Rain Barrel

Each summer, as much as 40 percent of the water you use at home is soaked up in the yard. Why not replace some of that with rainwater? According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, a rain barrel can save a single homeowner 1,300 gallons of water during the peak summer months, which is beneficial whether you live in an area hard-hit by drought, are looking to save money on your water bills, or just want to conserve a precious resource. As a bonus, naturally softened rainwater is great for plants too.

### You can create your own rain barrel in no time.

Begin by purchasing and thoroughly cleaning a large, food-quality barrel or even a plastic garbage can with a lid. Determine where you would like to place the barrel first—beneath a downspout next to your house is best, but also consider the location of your barrel in relation to your garden. Building a platform under your rain barrel (concrete cinder blocks work well) provides clearance for attaching a hose or filling a watering can. Once you've positioned your barrel, drill one hole near its base to install a hose spigot and another hole in the lid to attach the downspout. Cut and position your downspout so water flows into the barrel—installing a flexible downspout extender may help. Purchasing an overflow pipe is beneficial as well, because it carries excess water away from the house once the barrel is full.

**Voilà!** You're ready to start capturing rainwater.

For more DIY rain barrel information, visit [www.harvesth2o.com](http://www.harvesth2o.com). Or purchase a readymade rain barrel or downspout attachment kit at [www.cleanairgardening.com](http://www.cleanairgardening.com).

