



Rain Chains



A Seabrook-Hamptons Estuary Alliance (SHEA),
How-To Presentation

www.shea4nh.org

info@shea4nh.org

**SEABROOK-HAMPTONS
ESTUARY ALLIANCE**

WWW.SHEA4NH.ORG

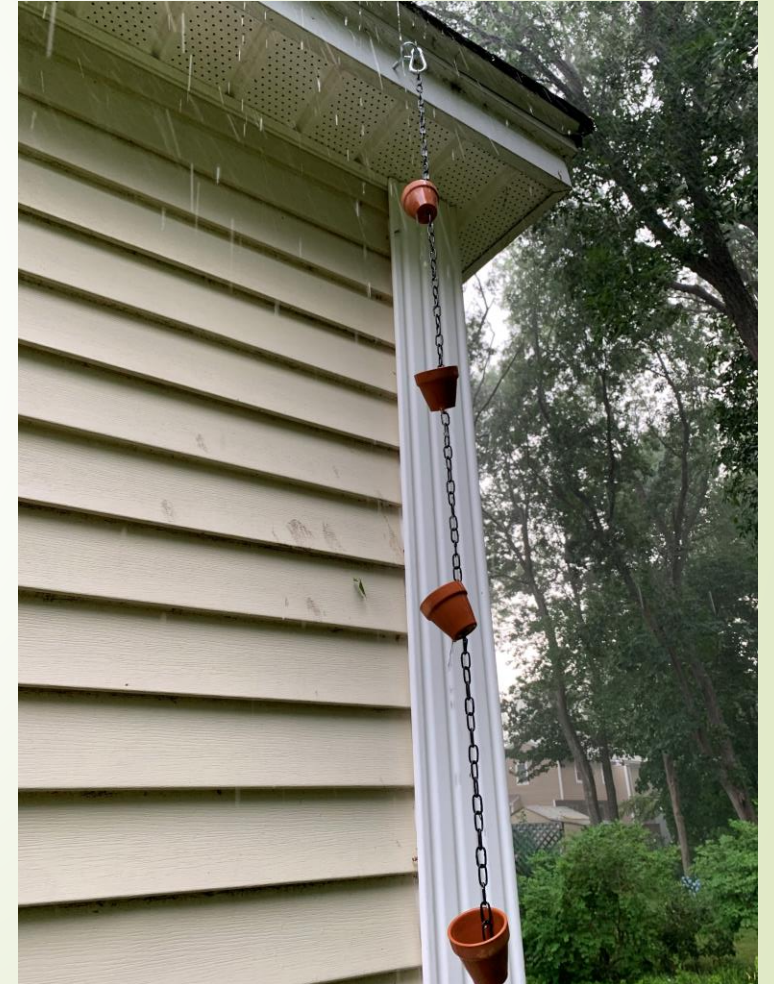


What is a Rain Chain?

A rain chain is an attractive solution to roof drainage, directing water in a visible way from the roof or gutter to the ground and away from the home. It can be a beautiful replacement to a more traditional downspout.

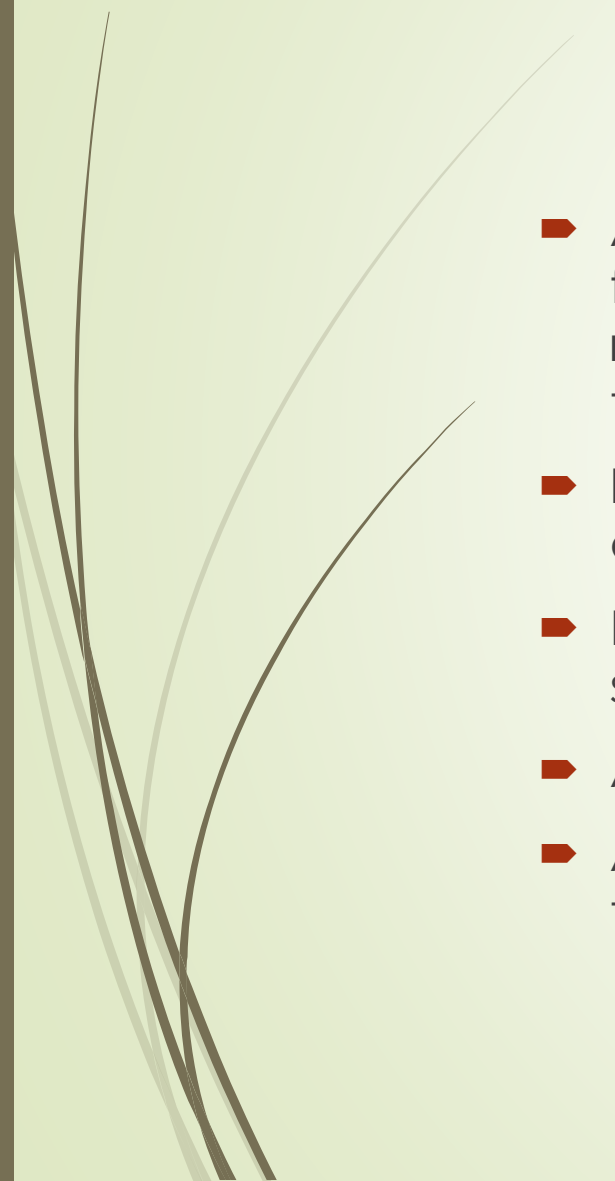
A rain chain is functional and beautiful and can be designed to enhance your outdoor space.

Rain chains have been used in Japan for hundreds of years to collect water into barrels for reuse.





Value of a Rain Chain

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- A rain chain protects your home as it directs water away from your foundation and into a rain garden, a basin, bowl, pebble-filled saucer, or a rain barrel. Having a hole at the bottom of the basin or saucer allows water to slowly drain, avoiding mosquito habitat.
 - It will slow down and control the flow of water from the roof line, reducing erosion as rainwater infiltrates more slowly back into the ground.
 - During rainfall, water cascades down the rain chain creating beautiful sounds and a waterfall-like appearance.
 - A rain chain is less likely to clog than a gutter, as water moves freely over it.
 - A rain chain helps conduct water from an impervious surface, your home, to a place where the rainwater can be reused or infiltrate into the ground.

Select a Site for Rain Chain

- Choose the site for your rain chain: it can replace a downspout or attach to an eave where water naturally falls from roof.
- Measure the height from the roof line to the ground (or top of rain barrel if directing water flow to a barrel). This is how long your rain chain will be. This is typically 9 feet but can be shorter if the water is draining into a rain barrel.



Gather Supplies

Here is What You Need for a 9-foot chain:

- 2-inch terracotta pots with drainage holes: 8 (less if your chain is shorter than 9 feet; number of feet minus one is how many pots you will use)
- 12-inch lengths of chain: 9 or less; select 1-inch rust-proof chain
- Yard stick
- Wire (40 inches of rust-proof wire, such as florist wire)
- Wire and chain cutters
- Eye bolt (screw eye) and carabiner clip, or S hook
- Drill (if using eye bolt)
- Paint and brush (optional)
- Safety equipment

Great Job!



Paint Terracotta Pots (optional)





Cut Chain

- Measure out 12 inches of chain
- Cut chain link with metal snip
- Remove cut link and discard
- Repeat until there are 9 sections of 12-inch chain; if the distance from the roof to the ground or rain barrel is more or less than 9 feet, cut as many sections of chain as needed to reach.

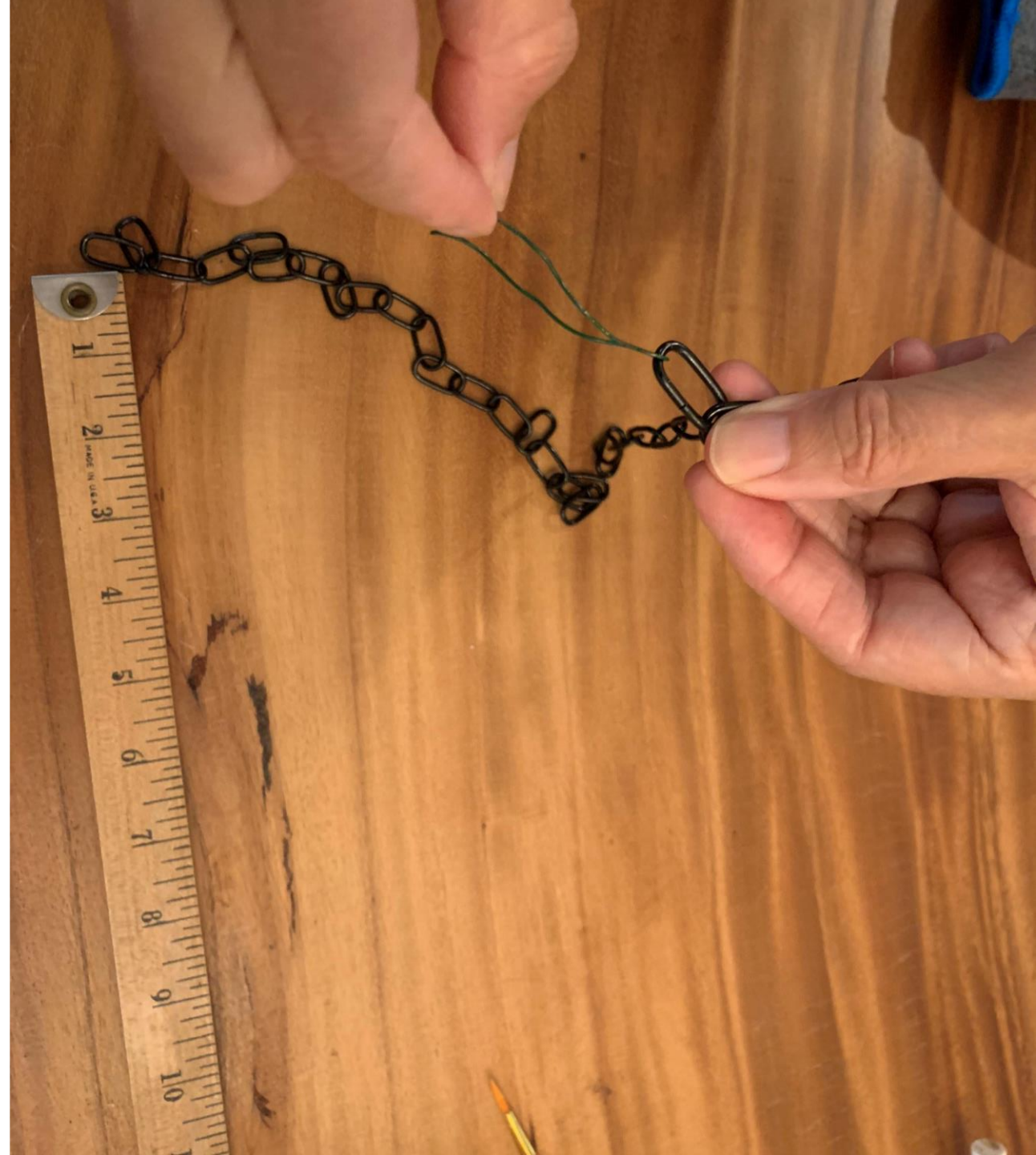
Measure and Cut Wire

- Measure 5 inches of wire
- Cut using wire cutters
- Repeat to end up with 8 pieces of cut wire for a 9-foot rain chain, which will be fed through the terracotta pots and the chains. You will need one piece of wire for each terracotta pot.



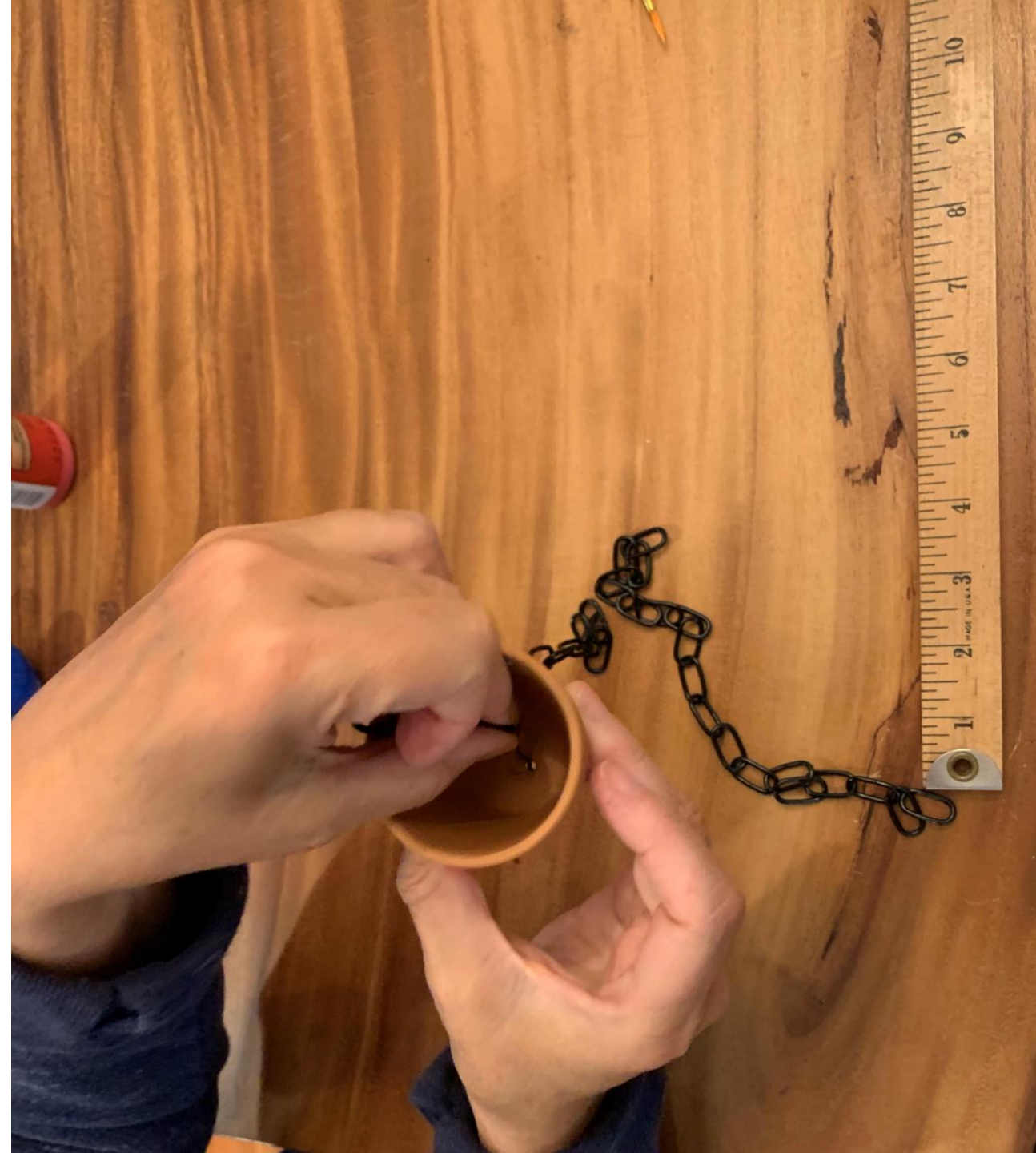
Assembling the Rain Chain: Feed Wire Through Chain

- Fold 5-inch wire in half
- Feed through an end link in the chain



Assembling the Rain Chain: Feed Wire Through Terracotta Pot

- After the wire is fed through the chain, twist it a couple of times
- Then, feed the two ends through the drainage hole at the bottom of the terracotta pot, feeding through the top of the pot
- Pull through the bottom; this wire will then get attached to the next chain. Wrap the wire through the top link of the next chain and twist until secure.



Assembling the Rain Chain: Connecting Wire to Next Chain

Push wire through pot.



Twist the wire onto first link
of next chain.



Continue Linking Chains and Pots, All
Pots Facing Same Direction!



Get Ready to Hang Rain Chain: Safety First!



Hanging the Rain Chain

- ▶ Drill pilot hole into fascia (front of eave) sized to fit screw eye
- ▶ Insert screw eye into fascia
- ▶ Attach carabiner clip to screw eye
- ▶ Take the top link of the first chain of the rain chain and clip it onto the carabiner clip to secure it to the roof
- ▶ Or, use S hook to hang from gutter



Attach carabiner clip to eye screw.
Slip rain chain onto the carabiner clip or S
hook



Hanging the Rain Chain on Carabiner Clip or S hook



Guiding the Rain

- Decide where you want the rain chain to guide the roof runoff
- Choices can include:
 - Rain Barrel
 - Terracotta plate or low bird bath, bowl, shallow plate, with drainage holes to allow slow release of water
 - Rain Garden
 - Splash block/downspout extender



Secure the Rain Chain

To keep your rain chain from becoming windblown, find a way to secure it at the bottom.

If you use a low container to catch the water, you can fill it with rocks and secure the rain chain to one of the rocks with a piece of wire.



Hang Your Rain Chain, Pots Facing Up!



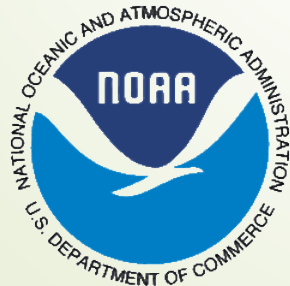
Rain Chain in Action!



Maintenance of a Rain Chain

- It is recommended that the rain chain be secured at the bottom so that high winds will not cause it to swing too much.
- Remove the rain chain during the winter to prevent ice build up.
- If your rain chain drains into a bowl or plate, use drainage holes to slowly release the water out of the them to avoid creating mosquito habitat.

This project was funded, in part, by NOAA's Office for Coastal Management under the Coastal Zone Management Act in conjunction with the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services Coastal Program.



About SHEA

SHEA (Seabrook Hamptons Estuary Alliance) was established for the protection of coastal and aquatic resources, and the preservation of the Seabrook-Hamptons estuarine system through education, community outreach, and research.

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