

RAIN BARRELS

Here are a few tips to keep in mind when shopping for, or building, a rain barrel:

- Prevent mosquitoes – Your rain barrel should have a screen completely covering the hole on top where water enters from the down spout.
- Provide overflow drainage – Your rain barrel should have an overflow hole near the top, with a connecting hose, to allow excess water to drain out and runoff away from the house.

How to Use Water Wisely in the Garden:

It's important that we all use water wisely, especially on our lawns and gardens and other times when we don't really need to use drinking water to get the job done. Fixing leaky faucets, catching rinse water in a bowl to water outdoor plants, and even catching rain water in a bucket to use when you scrub the patio are smart yet simple ideas that we all can use to save water and save money.

Why is a rain barrel good for your plants?

Rain is naturally soft water and devoid of minerals, chlorine, fluoride, and other chemicals. For this reason, Plants respond very well to rainwater.

How much water can you collect?

For every inch of rainfall that falls on a 1,000-sq. ft. roof, you can expect to collect approximately 600 gallons of rain water.

What is a Rain Barrel?

To the average homeowner, a rain barrel is merely a simple and inexpensive way to catch and store rainwater as it flows from a building's roof into the gutters and downspouts. This stored water then becomes a great alternative to tap/city water and can be used during periods of dry or drought to water gardens, trees, and other plants. This is free water, and obviously the homeowner saves money.

Why is a rain barrel good for the Environment?

- Rain Barrels save energy
- Rain Barrels help maintain streams
- Rain Barrels are good for the environment
- Rain Barrels reduce tap water usage saving you money

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Make your own rain barrel:

How to Make Your Own Rain Barrel. A simple and inexpensive way to catch and store rainwater that can later be used to water your lawns and gardens during dry periods.

Installation:

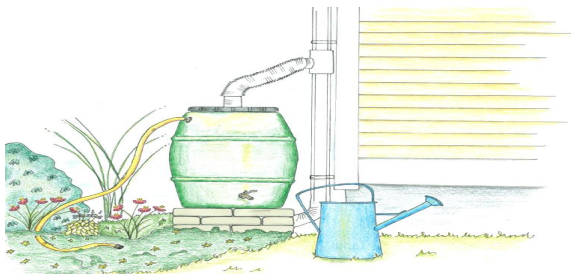
- Position the rain barrel (with blocks under it) adjacent to a downspout and remove enough of the downspout (with a hacksaw) so that there is ample room to attach a 45-degree elbow still allowing the rain barrel to easily fit underneath with approximately 2" of clearance.
- Your rain barrel must be secured on a raised, level surface (like concrete blocks). A full 55-gallon rain barrel weighs over 400 lbs. and tipping is a risk if it is unsecured or on uneven ground.
- Divert your overflow to a safe discharge location away from your homes foundation.
- The barrel must have a lid and a fine mesh screen covering any openings to prevent mosquitoes and debris from getting inside.
- Do not use moss control or other chemicals on your roof that are not garden safe.
- NEVER use water from the rain barrel for drinking, cooking or other potable uses.

Maintenance:

- Periodically brush the screen to prevent accumulation of debris.

Winterizing

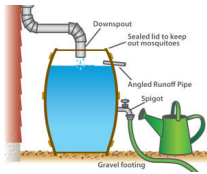
- Discontinue use of your rain barrel before the first frost.
- Empty the rain barrel completely.
- Clean the rain barrel with mild dishwashing liquid.
- Store the rain barrel upside down to prevent water from collecting in it.



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How to Make a Rain Barrel

List of Materials:



1. The Barrel: The barrel should be “food clean” plastic with a removable lid for cleaning and assembling. Barrels come in various sizes, the most common being 55 gallons. A heavy-duty barrel works best, but a something as thin as a Rubbermaid trash barrel would work, just not as well. Barrels can be obtained from various sources, such as Food and Beverage companies and Barrel and Drum suppliers.



2. The Spigot & Hardware: You will need a 3/4” hose bib spigot (1/2” will work but with smaller locknut and washer). These have male threads at one end to screw into the barrel and at the other to attach a standard size garden hose. You will also need a 3/4” galvanized locknut, a rubber washer with a 1” inner diameter, Teflon tape, superglue, and silicone sealant.

3. The Overflow Valve & Hardware: You will need a 3/4” brass overflow valve (plastic will work too) which has male threads on both ends with the outer end able to connect with the female end of a hose. These are called “male hose MIP adapter 3/4 X 3/4 X 1/2 “at Lowe’s and #A-665 at Home Depot. You will also need the locknut, rubber washer, Teflon tape, superglue, and silicone sealant.

Tools:

- Drill
- 1” hole saw or drill bit (use 15/16” for very secure fit)
- Utility knife
- Needle nose pliers or wrench
- Vegetable oil and cloth
- Screw driver and 6 screws (see # 14)
- Mesh screen for top filter

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Making the Rain Barrel

1. Clean and rinse your rain barrel with a mild soap and water (rainwater if you have any yet)
2. Drill a 1" hole with your hole saw or drill bit, just off the bottom of the container for the spigot assembly. Put it as low as possible for easy maximum water use. It's designed to be on a stand; you can use 4 cinder blocks. Note: if you are unable to reach down to the inside bottom of the barrel, you might want to use a 15/16" bit and put the washer on the outside of the barrel.
3. Drill a 1" hole an inch or so below the rim for your overflow valve assembly. This hole can go anywhere around the barrel at that level. Keep in mind: don't put it too close to the top (overflow) or too low (lose water storage). Please note that if you have a 2,000 square foot roof and large downspouts, you may want to get a larger overflow valve.
4. Use the 1" drill bit to make a dozen or so holes in the lid, Rainwater will filter through the mesh screen then through the holes into the barrel.
5. Take the utility knife to clean scraps from around the holes.
6. Wrap the barrel end of the spigot three times around with Teflon tape and then screw in the spigot squarely. It should go in by hand.
7. Take the rubber washer and glue the surface of one side with strong glue and reach into the barrel and work it over the threads, flush with the barrel side.
8. Screw on the locknut and finish tightening by turning the spigot while holding the locknut with a wrench or pliers. You may need a second person to turn while you hold.
9. Wrap the longer end of the overflow valve with Teflon tape three times and then screw it into the overflow hole by hand, or use a wrench or pliers if necessary. The outside male threads should be able to connect with a standard size garden hose to divert the overflow.
10. Repeat step # 7 above.
11. Screw on the locknut as far as possible by hand on the outside threads. Then hold the locknut while tightening overflow valve with wrench or pliers until it is very tight.
12. Take a tube of all-purpose silicone sealant and apply a bead where overflow valve meets the outside of the barrel. Note: If you have a secure seal, this step may not be necessary.
13. Repeat step #12 on the spigot assembly.
14. Trace the outline of the lid on a mesh fiberglass screen and then cut it out. Screw on, if necessary, or just tighten ring around cap to secure. This screen is designed to keep mosquitoes out.
15. Take the cloth and vegetable oil, and apply it to the scratched areas of the barrel to clean and shine it up.