



Rain Barrels

Rain barrels are containers that collect and store rain water to be used for watering plants, cleaning yard equipment, or topping off a swimming pool. Rain water is usually soft and very good for your indoor and outdoor plants; however, you should not drink or bathe in the water you collect. Rain barrels help manage the stormwater that runs off our roofs, driveways and roads. This water picks up pollutants and rushes into our waterways, eroding streambanks and causing pollution concerns. If collected in a rain barrel, stormwater can be released slowly, giving it time to seep into our soil as groundwater. Rain barrels can be designed to fit in nicely with your house and landscaping. There are endless possibilities!

Benefits

- Saves money spent on household water use. Rain water is FREE!
- Helps mitigate the problem of stormwater runoff.
- Reduces flooding on your property (and your downhill neighbor's).
- Provides plants with soft water, free of chlorine, lime or calcium.
- Conserves water for use during drought.

Parts of a Rain Barrel

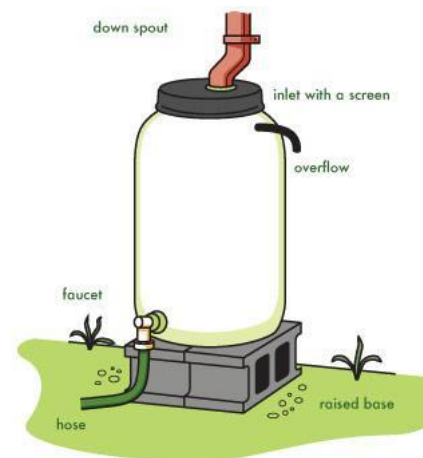
Barrel- must be food-grade; know what your recycled barrel used to hold! For safety, the suggested size is 55 gallons.

Downspout- adjusted to the height of your barrel, or attached to a downspout adapter to connect to your barrel.

Inlet- a downspout-sized opening in the lid of the barrel, receiving water from your downspout. A fine screen should cover this opening to keep out mosquitos and debris.

Faucet- located near the bottom of your barrel to release water for use. You can attach a gardening hose here. Placing the barrel on a raised base allows gravity to increase the pressure in the hose.

Overflow- an escape route for excess water when your barrel is full. This should be located near the top of the barrel and direct water away from your foundation. This could flow into a rain garden!





How to Install a Rain Barrel

1. Set your barrel(s) beneath a downspout on a surface that is: Sturdy (These barrels get extremely heavy when filled), Level (Use a level so your barrels do not fall and spill near your foundation), and Raised (You need gravity to build up pressure for your hose).
2. To attach the barrel to your downspout, you can trim your downspout so it sits right on top of the inflow, or you can buy a downspout adapter (couple bucks at Lowe's) to make sure it is perfect. This may allow you to detach the barrel in the winter when the water would freeze. You could also use a downspout diverter to only collect some of the water from your downspout (your barrel will still fill quickly). Find what works for your site.



3. Direct the overflow tube away from your foundation. You may set the end of the tube inside a piece of corrugated gutter, under rocks, to a vegetable garden or it could even lead to a rain garden!



You can hook up your garden hose to the faucet or fill up watering cans for potted plants. Remember to decorate your barrel first! If you make the barrel dark, you will prevent algal growth. If algae do grow, you can use an algaecide product or a little bleach. Clean barrels with a little bit of bleach or vinegar and water. If you get mosquitos, find a mosquito donut at a garden store to keep inside the barrel.

Rain Barrel Websites

<https://www.perkiomenwatershed.org/>

<http://www.atlantarainbarrels.com/freeinstructions.htm>

http://www.cityofbremerton.com/content/sw_makeyourownrainbarrel.html

<http://www.epa.gov/region3/p2/what-is-rainbarrel.pdf>