



Rain Barrels

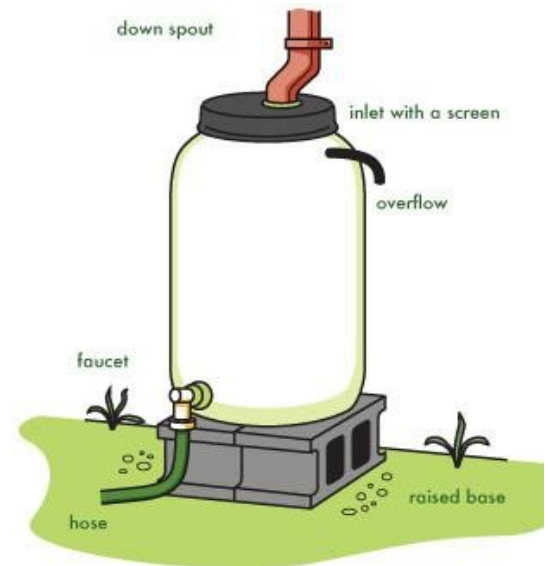
Rain barrels are containers that collect and store rainwater to be used for watering plants, cleaning yard equipment, or topping off a swimming pool. Rain water is usually soft and very good for your indoor and outdoor plants; however, you should not drink or bathe in the water you collect. Rain barrels help manage the stormwater that runs off our roofs, driveways and roads. This water picks up pollutants and rushes into our waterways, eroding stream banks 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, make sure you 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 mosquitoes 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 beneath a downspout on a surface that is:
 - **Sturdy** – The barrels will get extremely heavy when filled.
 - **Level** - Use a level to ensure that your barrel does not fall and spill near your foundation.
 - **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).



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!
4. Make sure to paint your barrel. If you make your barrel dark, you will prevent algal growth. If algae does grow, you can use an algaecide product or a little bleach to get rid of it. Clean barrels with a little bleach or vinegar and water a few times a year. If you get mosquitos, you can purchase a mosquito donut at a garden store that you can dissolve in the barrel.

