

RAIN BARREL

During a typical storm of 1 inch of rain over a 24-hour period, over 700 gallons of water runs off an average-sized roof (approximately 1,200 square feet). Since your roof can't absorb rainwater, water flows directly off of it or it flows into gutters, drops through the downspout and onto the ground. Once the water makes it to the ground, it moves quickly toward its drainage destination (a storm drain, ditch, creek, etc.), but not before picking up pollutants such as fertilizer and pet waste from the yard or motor oil from the driveway.

What is a Rain Barrel?

Rain barrels are simply containers that collect and store rainwater from a roof - the collected water is used to water the landscape. Rain barrels are usually positioned below the downspout of a roof gutter; however, you can still use a rain barrel if your house doesn't have gutters. You can also attach several rain barrels together with a simple connection kit. Rain barrels can be attached to a regular hose for periodic watering or to a soaker hose to continuously provide water to a landscape bed.



Buy a rain barrel that has a spigot to attach a hose and a screen to keep debris and mosquitoes out.

Position a rain barrel beneath a gutter downspout.



Rain Barrel Benefits

- ◆ **Reduce runoff leaving your property**
Rain barrels collect and store rainwater, thereby reducing the amount of runoff leaving your property and entering local creeks and waterways.
- ◆ **Water your landscape**
Water that is collected in rain barrels is ideal for plants because it has no added chemicals and is warmer than well or tap water. Many rain barrels are designed with a spigot (or two) to attach a garden or soaker hose.
- ◆ **Conserve water during times of drought**
Rain barrels help to conserve water during times of drought or water shortages. Using water from a rain barrel may be the only way to water your garden during a drought.
- ◆ **Save Money**
Using a rain barrel (or two) can save you money on your water bill since you are using free rainwater to irrigate your landscape.

Types of Rain Barrels

There are endless varieties of rain barrels; everything from do-it-yourself barrels to designer rain barrels that cost hundreds of dollars and come in a wide range of colors and sizes. The most important thing to remember is that an efficient rain barrel, whether it is homemade or store-bought, can make a significant difference in controlling water pollution in your community.

Installing a Rain Barrel

Rain barrels should be placed directly under gutter downspouts. Since most gutter downspouts run straight to the ground, you may need to modify yours a bit by cutting or sawing it to make it shorter.



Generally, gutter downspouts consist of a series of aluminum or plastic tubes with ends that are tucked inside each other and nailed or screwed to a building with brackets. Follow these steps to detach and reattach gutter tubes as necessary:

- ◆ Use a hammer or screwdriver to undo the brackets that are holding the tubes against the house or building.
- ◆ Remove the bottom section of the downspout.
- ◆ Place your rain barrel underneath the downspout. A flexible plastic tube (from a hardware store) can be attached to the downspout to help direct the flow of water into the barrel if needed; or you can cut the existing downspout to make it shorter.
- ◆ Using a hammer or screwdriver, reattach the modified downspout to the building.

Rain Barrel Maintenance and Considerations

- ◆ Rainwater that is collected in rain barrels is not safe to drink, cook with or bathe in.
- ◆ Buy a rain barrel with an overflow hose to divert excess water away from your house in case the rain barrel fills to capacity.
- ◆ Make sure your rain barrel has a tight lid or screen so children and animals can't fall in and mosquitoes can't breed. Periodically clean debris off the screen.
- ◆ If you are converting an old storage barrel into a rain barrel, make sure you know what type of material the barrel contained before you got it. Some barrels may have contained toxic materials and you don't want to pass these substances on to your lawn or garden.



Sources for This Section and Additional Rain Barrel Info

Benefits of Rain Barrels

http://www.lid-stormwater.net/raincist/raincist_benefits.htm

You Grow Girl

http://www.yougrowgirl.com/garden/rain_barrel.php

Rain Water Solutions

<http://www.rainwatersolutions.com/>

Rain Barrels and More

<http://www.rainbarrelsandmore.com>

Rain Saver USA

<http://www.rainsaverusa.com/>

