

RAIN BARRELS 101

WHY USE A RAIN BARREL?

Installing a rain barrel benefits our environment by reducing polluted stormwater runoff thus protecting the health of local waterways. This happens when you divert or capture stormwater from your roof into a rain barrel which reduces the amount of stormwater flowing into storm drains and overwhelming our aging combined sewer system. Excess stormwater/sewage can lead to combined sewer overflows and flooding.

Stormwater captured from your roof into a rain barrel reduces runoff from your property and provides you with water for watering your lawn, garden, indoor plants, cleaning windows or washing your car. However, the water in the rain barrel can collect pollutants from your roof and should not be used for drinking water.

Collecting rooftop runoff in rain barrels and using it for other purposes like those mentioned above can help to:

- Help to control local flooding
- Recharge local groundwater resources
- Protect rivers and streams from erosion
- Keep pollutants from paved areas from entering waterways
- Help to reduce pressure on aging sewer systems in combined sewer overflow communities

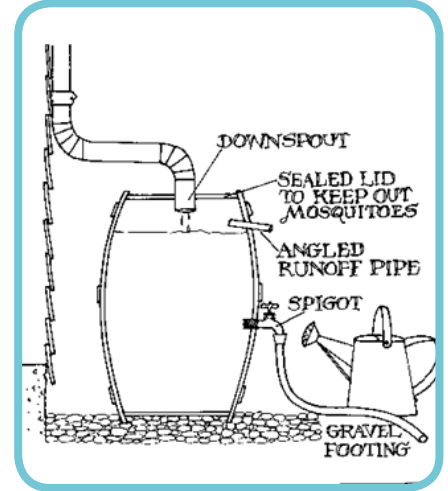


Installing a rain barrel is a simple and easy way to save money and conserve water, with the added benefits of decreasing stormwater runoff and improving water quality!!!

WHAT IS A RAIN BARREL?

A rain barrel is a container that stores water from the downspout of a rooftop gutter. Rain barrels have a spigot at the bottom that you can attach to a garden hose or use a watering can to obtain the rainwater. They also have an overflow device at the top to route excess water away from the foundation when the barrel is full. Using a garden hose here is also useful for directing the excess water. When full, a 55 gallon barrel can weigh up to 500 lbs. The rain barrel must be placed on a sturdy, level surface. A rain barrel works better the higher it is elevated. Cinder blocks or pavers are a great way to elevate the barrel.

Pre-made rain barrels are available in many sizes and styles and can be found at lawn and garden suppliers at prices up to \$200. To save money, you can make or acquire a recycled rain barrel made from a food grade drum. If doing it yourself, you can find plumbing parts at most hardware stores. We suggest using a food grade drum and avoiding trash barrels, which may not be sturdy enough to withstand the pressure when full of water.



RAIN BARREL FUN FACTS!

- If 100 houses in a neighborhood installed (3) 50-gallon rain barrels, 15,000 gallons of water would be saved after just $\frac{1}{4}$ inch of rainfall; enough to run the average sprinkler for over 62 hours.
- Conserving water can also save energy. Over 9% of the electricity in the U.S. is used to pump, treat, and heat water! By using a rain barrel, you are making a difference in reducing energy that contributes to greenhouse gases.
- By conserving and using stored water for landscaping purposes, you can save money on your water bill!
- Painting your rain barrel with a lovely design can make your functional barrel a work of art!!

RAIN BARRELS 101 KEY POINTS

- Rain barrels help reduce stormwater runoff from polluting our waterways.
- Rain barrels help to save money by conserving the rain water for other uses.
- Installation of a rain barrel is simple, effective, and cost-efficient.

