

Basic Installation Instructions and Guidelines for your Rain Barrel

1. If you have gutters on your roof, place your barrel under the downspout so water flows directly onto the top of the barrel.
2. If you do not have gutters, but have a valley or an area on your roof where there is a steady stream of rain off the roof during a rainstorm, simply place your rain barrel so that the rain will stream onto the top of the barrel.
3. Your rain barrel must be placed on a surface that is flat and level. Use a spade to flatten the area for the bottom of the barrel.
4. If you are planning to use drip irrigation or have a garden that is level or slightly uphill from the barrel it will be necessary to raise the barrel off of the ground. By raising it 2 feet off of the ground, you will be able to easily fill a watering can or use gravity to water your plants.
5. A full rain barrel will weigh around 400 pounds. A good base can be made of cinder blocks, landscaping blocks, or a well built wooden box or platform.
6. Some assembly is necessary. Inside each barrel are a stainless steel screen, a 4-foot section of hose, and a 90-degree angle PVC connector. The screen easily sets inside the 3" hole on the top of the barrel. The 4' section of hose connects to the overflow. The elbow fittings threaded end screws into the tapped hole on the side of the barrel. The hose fits easily over the other unthreaded end and should face downward. This drains excess rainwater away from the house or back into the drywell at the bottom of the downspout.

Tips for Using Your Rain Barrel

1. Your gutters and downspout should be clean of debris and in good working condition. By adding a leaf-catching screen at the top of the downspout, you can prevent extra buildup of debris on the top of the barrel.
2. Never use water collected in these rainbarrels for drinking or cooking. Although these are food-grade barrels, they are for non-potable uses only, such as: watering your garden and house plants, washing the car, doing the laundry, or rinsing items outside.
3. To maintain the tight connection on the spigot at the bottom of the barrel, please refrain from lifting, bumping, or moving the barrel by the spigot. To maintain the tight connection, open the barrel and tighten the nut on the inside of the barrel.
4. The stainless steel screened inlet prevents insects from breeding in your barrel, and stops leaves, twigs, and rodents from getting in the barrel. Please note that pollen may clog your screen. It can be easily lifted out and rinsed off.
5. The lid of the rain barrel may be unscrewed for easy cleaning of the barrel.
6. **Winter Instructions.** Freezing rainwater will crack or damage the barrel. Drain the barrel before freezing weather. Remove the lid and turn it upside down to totally drain the barrel. Note: I have chased my rain barrels across the yard after draining them...they are lightweight and need to be put away for the winter!
7. The barrel works as a great storage unit for the winter for hoses or other garden accessories.
8. To maximize the rainwater collected, try a low flow drip irrigation system. By raising your rain barrel 2' off the ground, you have created a 2 pounds per square inch water pressure which will run a low flow drip system.
9. If you need more rain harvesting capacity, consider connecting more than one barrel.



Photo 1

The regular downspout has been shortened so rain flows directly onto the top of collecting surface of the barrel. Note the PVC elbow and overflow hose on the side of the barrel. This allows the overflow from the barrel to be moved into another barrel or away from the foundation.