

# Make a Rain Barrel...

...capture the sky

## 1 Plan your custom rain barrel

Ready to start capturing rainwater for later use? First, choose a location for your barrel. Consider which downspout(s) you would like to divert into the barrel, and the proximity to plants or muddy tools needing water.

Next, sketch out your rain barrel. Determine the following:

- Where do you want to divert the excess water (through the overflow hose) when the barrel gets full? Some people divert it into a second rain barrel.
- Do you want to elevate your barrel? (Caution: full barrels will weigh 400 lbs.)
- How high do you want to place the spigot?



## 2 Gather Materials

- 55-gallon barrel
- 30" x 30" piece of fiberglass screen
- 6' 6" length of 1/4" bungee cord
- 1" hose barb adapter  
1" conduit locknut for back of adapter
- 1" washing machine drain hose (recommended length: 6')
- 1/2" sillcock (spigot)  
1/2" nipple to screw into sillcock  
1/2" faucet locknut to screw onto back of nipple

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Rain barrels can reduce the volume and velocity of rainwater entering the storm drainage system.

### 3 Gather Tools

Jigsaw (a.k.a. sabersaw) with a long, strong blade. This will be used to cut the large inlet hole.

Drill with bits:

1 1/4" for overflow hole (hose barb adapter)  
13/16" for the spigot (nipple)

Caulk gun and caulk  
Soldering iron or lighter  
Teflon tape (optional)

#### **Warning!**



Though excellent for watering ornamental plants, rain barrel water should not be used as a potable water source.

It will likely contain fecal coliform bacteria from bird droppings, and other potentially harmful microbes. Do not use for drinking, washing or cooking.

### 4 Assemble the Barrel

#### **1) Barrel preparation**

Use the drill to cut a small hole in which to insert the jigsaw blade. Cut a wide circle just inside the top lip of the barrel. If necessary, rinse barrel out where rinse water will be captured and treated (such as a car wash, not the storm drain).

#### **2) Spigot assembly**

Apply either Teflon tape or caulk to the nipple's threads and screw into back of sillcock. While that dries, choose the location for your spigot and drill a 13/16" hole in the barrel. Apply caulk to the spigot/nipple assembly and the faucet locknut and screw on snugly (this may take two people). Excess caulk should ooze out around the edges of the assembly; wipe as desired.

#### **3) Overflow assembly**

Choose the location and drill a 1 1/4" hole. Caulk and insert the hose barb adapter. Caulk around backside and screw on the conduit locknut snugly. Additional caulk may be used on the barb when you slide on the overflow hose. A hose clamp is another option.

#### **4) Screen assembly**

Melt ends of bungee cord with a lighter or soldering iron to prevent fraying. Place the screen over the barrel and secure by tying the bungee around the top of the barrel. You're done!

### 5 Maintenance

Rain barrels require little maintenance. Remove debris from the top screen, particularly in the fall, and occasionally check the overflow hose for clogs.

To physically prevent mosquitoes from utilizing your barrel as a breeding habitat,

- Keep the piece of screen secured around barrel opening, and patch holes as needed
- Keep the hose attached to your overflow fitting

In cold weather, take your rain barrel out of operation. Store upside down so it will fully drain and remain relatively clean. Downspouts may be reattached to divert winter precipitation.