

Rain Barrel Workshop

Rain barrels are small tanks that are used to collect and store rainwater from a roof system. Rain barrels can be connected with a diverter to any downspout, which redirects water from the downspout into the rain barrel.

Why should I use a rain barrel?

During the summer, watering can make up to almost 40% of your water use. By using a rain barrel you can collect up to 1,300 gallons of water per year. Save money by using your collected rain water to water your lawn and gardens.

Rain barrels help keep our water clean. When it rains, water hits impervious surfaces such as roofs and parking lots, which do not allow water to infiltrate into the soil, leading to runoff. The runoff can then pick up harmful pollutants such as nutrients, bacteria, chemicals and sediment. These then can end up in waterbodies such as the Wabash River. By using a rain barrel, you are helping reduce water runoff!

Plants also tend to enjoy the natural soft rain water that is free from chemicals and minerals added to treated water.

Who can use a rain barrel?

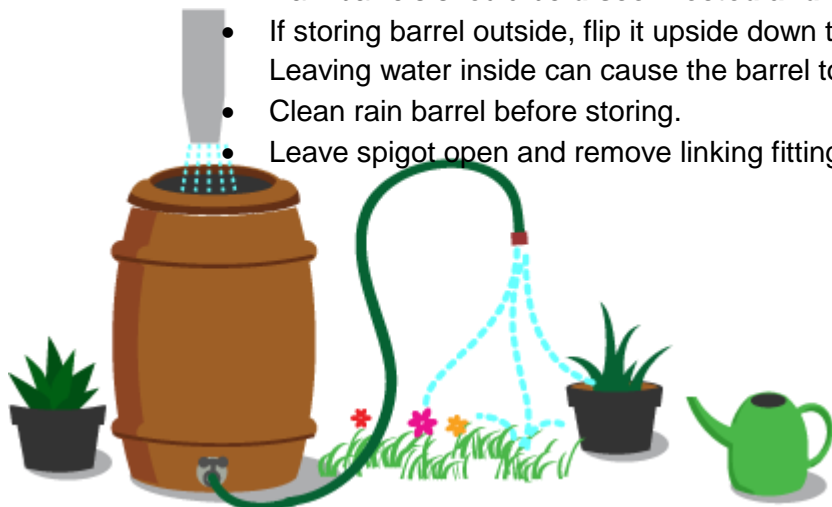
Almost anyone with a roof can use a rain barrel. Rain barrels should NOT be used with wood shingles or shakes roofs that have been treated to prevent rot or moss. They also should not be used with copper roofs or gutters. Zinc anti-moss strips on these can leach toxic chemicals.

Installing

- Rain barrels can be installed in the beginning of April.
- Ensure the surface the barrel is being placed on is level. Full rain barrels are very heavy!
- Place rain barrel higher than area you want to water.
- Place rain barrel near the area that you want to water.
- Do not place in area where it can block opening or air conditioner.

Winterizing

- Rain barrels should be **disconnected and stored** in the first couple weeks of October.
- If storing barrel outside, flip it upside down to prevent water from accumulating inside. Leaving water inside can cause the barrel to crack.
- Clean rain barrel before storing.
- Leave spigot open and remove linking fitting cap



Usage and Maintenance

- Wash rain barrel as needed to prevent algae growth
 - Solution of ¼ cup castile soap and ¼ cup of vinegar or lemon juice with 5 gallons of water or
 - 1/8 cup chlorine bleach with 5 gallons of water
- Clean gutters seasonally to prevent clogging.
- Remove debris that may accumulate on top of rain barrel.
- Drain before every storm.
- Rain barrels should be drained after 5 days. While there is netting to keep mosquitos out, draining it eliminates the chance of mosquitos multiplying if they were to get inside.
- When watering plants, always water the soil and not the plant directly. This allows water to be further cleaned by soil.

Soaker Hoses

Soaker hoses are a great way to let your rain barrel slowly water your gardens. Just connect a hose to you rain barrel and place it in your garden.

Tips

- No flow/zero flow soaker hoses work best with the low pressure from the rain barrel.
- The higher your rain barrel, the more pressure. Rain barrel must be uphill from soaker hoses in order for water to flow.
- You can cover hoses with mulch to protect them from the sun.
- If your hoses are not emptying you can check the spigot for clogs. If the spigot is clean, try using your garden hose to flush out the soaker hose.

Daisy Chaining

Can't get enough rain barrels? You can install more than one rain barrel per downspout by daisy chaining. This allows 2 or more barrels to fill up during a rain event. The barrels will fill and empty at the same rate.

The second opening at the bottom of the rain barrel allows you to connect 2 rain barrels together using a ½" hose.

For installation and winterization guides visit: http://www.tippeconow.com/opt_rain_barrel.php

Repairing a cracked rain barrel: <https://www.hunker.com/13414665/how-to-repair-a-rain-barrel>

