



HOW TO BUILD A RAIN BARREL

GOOD FOR YOUR YARD, THE ENVIRONMENT AND YOUR WATER BILL!

A rain barrel is a container that holds rainwater from downspouts and rooftops and stores it for future use, such as for watering lawns, trees, shrubs, or gardens.

Did you know an average 1-inch rainfall can produce more than 600 gallons of runoff from your roof?

That means you can install several rain barrels on your property to maximize your benefits!

WHY USE A RAIN BARREL?

Simple: A rain barrel can save you money on your water bill by collecting water and storing it for the dry summer months when you need it most.

- Good for watering plants: Although people can't drink the collected water, plants actually prefer naturally "soft" rainwater to tap water.
- Smarter way to water the lawn: During the summer months, it is estimated that 40 percent or more of household water is used for lawn and garden maintenance.
- Safe for watering the garden: Just wash fruits and vegetables thoroughly before eating.
- Cheaper resource for washing the car.

RECYCLED RAIN BARRELS

Several local organizations sell recycled 55-gallon barrels preassembled and in kits for reduced prices, including:

Bridging The Gap

(816) 561-1087 | bridgingthegap.org

Little Blue River Watershed Coalition

(816) 356-4040 | littleblueriverwc.org

Habitat ReStore

(816) 231-6889 | restorekc.org

COMMERCIALLY AVAILABLE RAIN BARRELS

Rain barrels can be purchased at most home improvement stores or online and range in cost from \$80 to \$150. These might come preassembled and are available in a variety of shapes, sizes and colors to fit your style, landscape or homeowners association requirements. Commercial rain barrels will include the necessary hardware and instructions to connect them.



DIY: BUILD YOUR RAIN BARREL

You can build your own rain barrel with a clean, 55-gallon plastic barrel (new or recycled) and a few parts. First, assemble these materials:

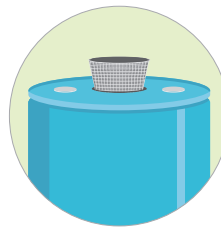
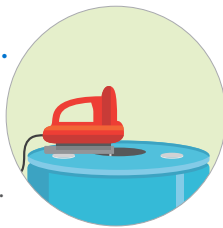
- 55-gallon plastic barrel
- 2, 3/4-inch faucets
- 1, 3/4-inch female coupling
- Skimmer basket (like those found in garden ponds and pools)
- Roll of Teflon tape
- All-purpose caulk or plumbing sealant
- 5-foot section of garden hose
- 4 hose couplers
- 12-by-12-inch piece of fiberglass window screen
- Downspout “Y” diverter (sometimes called a splitter)
- 3 or 4 concrete blocks or stones large enough to hold the barrel and allow water to drain (8-by-8-by-12-inch blocks work well)
- Duct tape / weatherproof tape

You'll also need a few tools:

- 1-inch spade drill bit
- Utility knife
- Electric jigsaw
- Marker
- Electric drill

1. Create a hole in the top of the barrel.

Use the skimmer basket to trace a circle outline on the barrel. Pre-drill a small hole inside the circle using the 1-inch spade bit. Next, use a jigsaw to cut along the inside of the circle outline. Pop out the middle, and discard.



2. Prepare the skimmer basket.

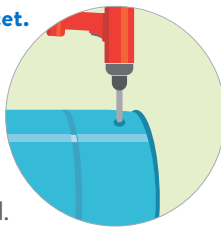
Cut a fiberglass window screen to fit across the top of the basket. Affix the screen to the lip of the basket using caulk or plumbing sealant. Allow several hours for it to dry before placing it in the top hole.

3. Adjust the downspout to pour into barrel.

Using a hacksaw, cut the gutter so a “Y” diverter can be attached. Attach the “Y” diverter, reattach the downspout to half of the “Y,” and flip the rudder so the water flows down the barrel side of the diverter.

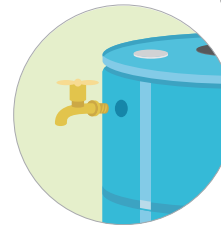
5. Install the water faucet.

Mark a hole at least 2 inches from the bottom of the barrel. Follow the same instructions as Step 4. Caulk where the faucet and the barrel meet to ensure a firm seal.



4. Install the overflow faucet.

Mark a hole at least 2 inches from the top of the barrel. Use a 1-inch drill bit to drill the hole. Screw the faucet into the hole. Use a utility knife to increase the hole size if needed. Remove the faucet, wrap threads in tape, caulk threads and replace. Caulk where the faucet and the barrel meet to ensure a firm seal.

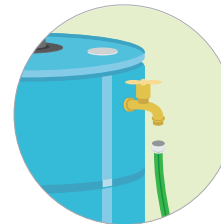


7. Install hoses.

Screw the 3-foot section of hose onto the overflow faucet and the 2-foot section of hose to the water faucet.

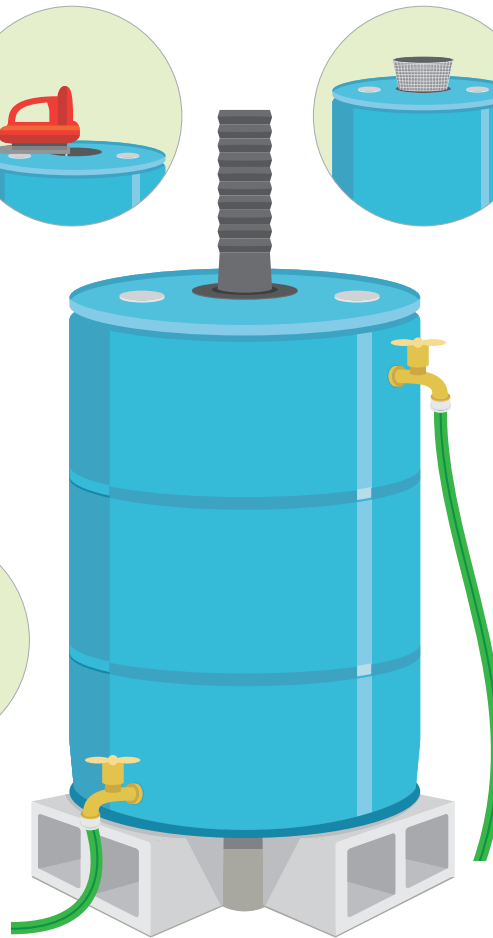
6. Prepare hoses.

Cut 2 sections of hose: one 3 feet long and the other 2 feet long. Add the hose couplers to all ends of the hose (4 total). Follow coupler instructions.



8. Build a base.

Place 3 concrete blocks in a triangle shape to elevate the rain barrel for increased pressure and flow. Make sure the blocks are level and stabilized to prevent tipping.



ALWAYS REMEMBER TO KEEP THE OVERFLOW FAUCET OPEN!