

Install a Rain Barrel

Did you know the average roof sheds tens of thousands of gallons of water each year?

A rainfall of one inch can produce more than 700 gallons of runoff from a typical house.

Where does the water go?

Most of the rainwater runoff from your property enters the sewer system. The sewer system, however, was not designed to handle large amounts of rainwater.

You can help reduce the amount of water entering the sewer system by capturing some of that water on your property by installing a rain barrel.

A rain barrel is a container that collects and stores rainwater from downspouts and rooftops, allowing you to water your plants and yard in the dry summer months.

Generally, a rain barrel is made using a 55-gallon barrel and some equipment that you can find at most hardware and home improvement stores.



How to Make a Rain Barrel

You will need the following materials to make a rain barrel:

- 55-gallon barrel (smaller or larger ones can be used)
- Skimmer basket or plastic plant pot (about 9 inches outer diameter)
- Fiberglass window screen
- Silicone sealant
- Discharge hose, about 1-1/4" diameter, such as for a washing machine, about 3 feet long
- Washing machine fitting, male and female ends
- Spigot, 3/4" (plastic or brass)
- Splash guard
- Old bicycle tube, cut 1/2" wide and about 38" long
- Gutter screws
- Utility knife
- Drill bits: 1/2", 1", 1-1/2"
- Hand drill
- Screwdriver set
- Pencil or marking tool
- Jigsaw or reciprocating saw with blades
- Caulking gun



How to Make a Rain Barrel



1. Top Hole and Basket

- Use the skimmer basket or plant pot to trace a template on top of barrel.
- Pre-drill a small hole using a 1" spade bit; drill inside the marked area.
- Use a jigsaw to cut out the pattern following the inside line.
- Cut the fiberglass screen to fit the skimmer basket, plus 2" on each side.
- Affix the screen to lip of basket using the bicycle tube piece like a rubber band.



2. Upper Overflow Drain

- Mark a hole approximately 2" from the top of the rain barrel, tracing the plastic fitting.
- Use the 1-1/2" spade bit (or one the same size as the fitting) to drill a hole where you made the mark.
- Screw the plastic fitting into the hole. Use a utility knife as needed to increase the size of the hole.
- Use silicone sealant around the fitting on the outside of the barrel, as needed. Allow the sealant to dry.

Your power to protect our waterways increases when rain barrels are used with other water quality protection activities, such as installing rain gardens, picking up after pets and using lawn chemicals wisely.



How to Make a Rain Barrel



3. Bottom Drain

- Mark a hole about 2" from the bottom of the rain barrel, tracing the spigot fixture. The opposite side of the barrel from the skimmer basket location is best or on either side depending on rain barrel placement.
- Use the 1" drill bit to drill a hole where you made the mark.
- Screw plastic or brass spigot into the hole. Use a utility knife, as needed, to increase the hole size.
- Optional: Remove the spigot and place Teflon tape over the threads; replace the spigot.
- Place spigot back into the hole. Use the silicone sealant to seal around the spigot on the threads when the spigot is almost in place.



4. Attach Hoses

- Place the skimmer basket over the hole on top of the rain barrel.
- Attach the 3-foot 1-1/4" diameter discharge hose to the upper overflow drain.
- Secure the discharge hose with a hose clamp, if needed.
- Screw your garden hose to the spigot in the bottom drain.

5. Final Steps

- Build a base out of cinder blocks, bricks, decorative stones or railroad ties to elevate the rain barrel to create water pressure.
- Adjust the downspout from the building to flow into the skimmer basket at the top of the rain barrel.
- Make sure the overflow discharge hose is allowed to drain away from the building.