

Recycle the Rain



Start with a rain barrel

A rain barrel is a system that collects and stores rain water from your roof that would otherwise be lost to runoff and diverted to storm drains and streams. A rain barrel is relatively simple and inexpensive to install and can sit conveniently under any residential gutter down spout.

Rain barrels are available for purchase from local businesses or over the internet.

Rain barrels come in many shapes, sizes and colors. Some rain barrel owners add creative touches such as painted flowers or scenery,



How much rain water can I collect?

A typical 1/2" rainfall will fill a 50 to 55-gallon barrel. Figure about a half gallon of water per 1-inch rainfall. A 2,000 sq-ft roof can collect about 1,000 gallons of water (accounting for about 20% loss from evaporation, runoff and splash).

Uses of collected water

Connect a soaker hose (with the pressure-reducing washer removed)

Fill a watering can and hand-water plants, flower beds and gardens.

Keep your compost bin moist.

Rinse off gardening tools, patio furniture, and your car.

Rain barrels are a good option for homes and buildings with:

- Downspouts that discharge onto driveways, sidewalks, and other paved surfaces, or steep slopes.
- Lawn, garden, or other landscaping that requires frequent watering.

You can install multiple rain barrels, in series, to a single downspout. You can also connect a single rain barrel to several leaders draining different portions of your roof.

Do I need a permit?

Check with your county to see if a permit is required to install a small rain barrel for landscaping watering. Some subdivisions with deed restrictions prohibit them. You can also check your local plumbing and health code for guidance.

Stay away from plumbing

It's important to keep your rain barrel independent from existing house piping or sprinkler system piping to prevent a cross-connection to your potable water.

What about filtering?

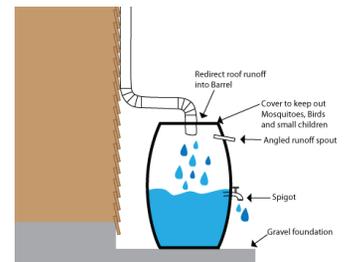
Leaf debris, bird droppings and chemicals from roof material won't likely be harmful to plants. Use a window screen or wire mesh to keep out debris and insects. Clean the tank periodically to remove any settling.

How it works

Catch rain water from a roof with gutters.

Store the rain in barrels, both big and small, which can be plastic, fiberglass, concrete or metal, as long as they're non-porous and smooth. Even a garbage can will work.

Use collected water to water plants, by either filling a watering can or attaching a soaker or garden hose.



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