RAIN BARREL

What is a rain barrel, and why should you install one?

A rain barrel is a container that connects to a downspout on your home and is used to collect and store rain water that runs off your roof. The collected rain can be used to water your yard or landscaping, which can reduce your water bill. If you disconnect your downspout and add a rain barrel, you can help prevent the sewer system from becoming overwhelmed by excess storm water, which reduces water pollution, flooding, erosion and sewer overflows throughout a community.

How do you install a rain barrel?

Notice: Before getting started, always check city and county ordinances to ensure your plans meet local requirements.

Tools and Materials Needed:

- Your rain barrel and any tools or materials needed for assembly as listed in the manufacturer's instructions.
- The tools and materials listed in the Downspout Disconnection Guide for disconnecting your downspout.
- Any extension hoses or connector pieces needed to divert the flow of water from your downspout into the rain barrel and to discharge excess water in your barrel from the overflow output.

Step One – Choose a rain barrel.

Rain barrels come in all shapes and sizes. Choose a rain barrel that is:

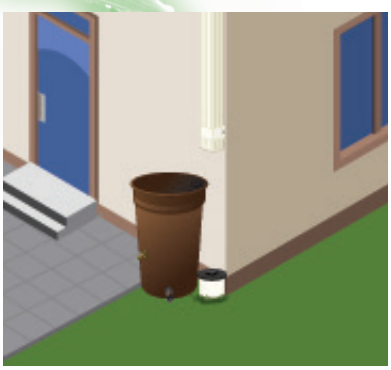
- Functional – The barrel you choose should have good quality plastic or brass spigots; an overflow output that is at least the same diameter as your downspout to allow excess water to exit the barrel freely; and a removable lid so that you can easily remove any dirt or debris from your roof that has collected in your barrel.

- Right for your property – Consider where you are going to place your rain barrel when searching for a barrel to purchase. Ensure that the areas where you will be connecting your downspout and attaching hoses will be easily accessible in the position you plan to place your barrel.

- An accent to your home and landscaping – Your rain barrel will be a more or less permanent fixture on your property, so be sure to choose a design that complements your home and property. Also, some Homeowners' Associations (HOAs) have restrictions on outdoor structures. Check with your HOA to see if there are any restrictions on rain barrels.

Step Two – Disconnect your downspout.

Follow the steps in the Downspout Disconnection Guide to disconnect your downspout. Be sure to measure and cut your downspout so that your rain barrel and any connector pieces will fit.



Step Three – Assemble your rain barrel.

Assemble your rain barrel according to the manufacturer's instructions.

Step Four – Attach your disconnected downspout to your rain barrel.

Divert the flow from your disconnected downspout pipe into the rain barrel. Cover your cut downspout pipe securely with an elbow or flexible hose as instructed in the Downspout Disconnection Guide, and direct the flow of storm water from your downspout into the opening in your rain barrel.

Step Five – Choose how to direct the overflow from your rain barrel.

The overflow from your full rain barrel can be discharged into your yard or landscaping, a rain garden or back into the sewer system from which you disconnected your downspout. If you discharge the overflow into your yard, landscaping or rain garden, remember to ensure the water exits the hose or pipe at least six feet from your home's foundation, five feet from a public sidewalk and 20 feet from a roadway. Place a splash block or rocks beneath the overflow output on your rain barrel to slow the flow of water and prevent your yard from eroding. **The set-up you choose must meet city and county requirements, and water discharged from your rain barrel should not affect your neighbor's property.**

Step Six – Ensure your rain barrel is functioning properly after a rain event.

After it rains, inspect your rain barrel to make sure the connection is good and your downspout is emptying water into the rain barrel properly. When your barrel is full, check the overflow output to be sure the excess water is exiting the rain barrel freely. Also, check to see if the area to which you are directing the excess water can handle it and that water is not pooling on your property. If the water is not soaking into the ground, try discharging to a different location.