



Rain Barrel Installation Instructions



Rain Barrels come in different shapes, sizes, and colors...

Old 55-gallon **food-grade plastic drums** can be modified to be used as rain barrels. This helps reduce the cost for homeowners and the amount of waste generated by the food and beverage industry. They can also be decorated based on homeowner preference.



Wineries and distilleries are a source for old **wooden casks** that can be modified and re-used as rain barrels. Though heavier and more costly than plastic drums, these wooden casks provide a decorative feature to one's home landscape.

Pre-fabricated 55-gallon rain barrels are often the most costly option. However, they look great initially and do not require any additional modifications. They can also be purchased easily from a nearby retailer.

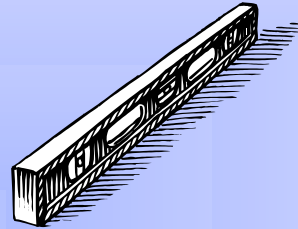
Plastic trash cans, though smaller than the 55-gallon drums, can also be purchased easily from a retailer and modified as a rain barrel. Food-grade plastic drums are not always readily available to the general public.



Obtain about 10 feet of 1.25 inch sump pump hose for use on the overflow spout.



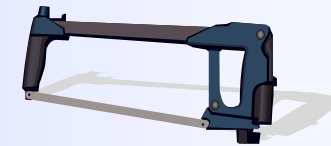
Prepare the area under the down spout by leveling the ground and adding sand or crushed stone, if necessary.



Rain barrels need to be elevated above ground level to create adequate water pressure. Use bricks, cinder blocks or pressure treated wood to create a platform. Note: 55 gallons of water weighs almost 500 pounds.



Cut the downspout above the rain barrel. Leave enough space to re-attach the downspout elbow.



Place the rain barrel on the platform, direct the downspout above the screen, and wait for the next storm!

- Do not use rain barrel water for cooking or drinking.
- Always keep the screen on your rain barrel to prevent mosquito breeding. Add a mosquito "dunk" to the barrel (available at pet stores or online).
- Do not collect rain water if you use a moss killer or suspect other chemical contaminants on your rooftop.
- Disconnect the barrel in the winter or store it inside.
- Use the water within a week or before the next storm event, whichever comes first.



Rain Barrel Benefits

Reduce Stormwater Runoff



A rain barrel allows you to capture and reuse water on your own property and reduce the amount of water that goes onto the road. Roadways accumulate a mixture of sediment, litter, fertilizers, pesticides, animal waste and other contaminants that can be washed into nearby waterways.

Healthy Water for Your Plants

Rainwater has no added chemicals, is usually soft and free of dissolved minerals. This untreated water is great for your indoor plants, your garden and lawn, washing your car, and your birdbaths.



Conservation of Water



A public or private water supply is a limited resource, especially in times of drought. So, make the most of the rain and capture some of it to reuse on your own property.

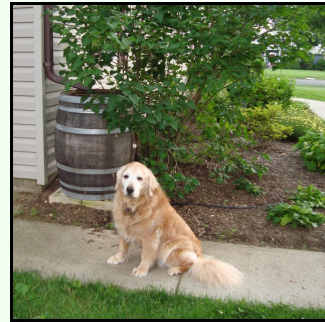
Save Money

Why pay to water your property with tap water when you can collect hundreds of gallons per year at no cost? You can install several rain barrels at your home to increase your savings.



Stormwater Management in Your Backyard

The *Stormwater Management in Your Backyard* program was developed by the Rutgers Cooperative Extension Water Resources Program in collaboration with the USDA Regional Water Program and New Jersey Sea Grant. The program provides educational lectures, hands-on training, and community-level outreach for homeowners and other groups on the topics of water quality issues and management practices such as rain gardens and rain barrels. County Master Gardener and Environmental Steward volunteers play an important role in many aspects of the program.



For more information, contact:

Christopher C. Obropta, Ph.D., P.E.
Extension Specialist in Water Resources
(732) 932-9800, ext. 6209
obropta@envsci.rutgers.edu

Amy Boyajian, Program Associate
(732) 932-9800, ext. 6164
boyajian@envsci.rutgers.edu

Your Cooperative Extension County Office by visiting/calling:
<http://njaes.rutgers.edu/county/>
(732) 932-5000

Cooperating Agencies: Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and County Boards of Chosen Freeholders. Rutgers Cooperative Extension, a unit of the Rutgers New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station, is an equal opportunity program provider and employer.

An Introduction to

Rain Barrels



Published by:

RUTGERS
New Jersey Agricultural
Experiment Station

Originally developed by:



<http://water.rutgers.edu>