

Build Your Own Rain Barrel

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What is a rain barrel?

A rain barrel collects and stores rainwater from your rooftop to use later for things like lawn and garden watering. Water collected in a rain barrel would normally flow through your downspout, onto a paved surface, and eventually into a storm drain.

Why use a rain barrel?

- Rain barrels help lower water costs (a rain barrel can save approximately 1,300 gallons of water during peak summer months)
- Storing rainwater for garden and lawn use helps recharge groundwater naturally.
- Rain barrels reduce water pollution by reducing stormwater runoff, which can contain pollutants like sediment, oil, grease, bacteria, and nutrients.
- Rain barrels are inexpensive and easy to build and install.

How do I make my own?

Lower Spigot (brass sillcock/hose bibb)

- Cut a hole about 2-3" from bottom of barrel using a 1" bit or hole saw
- Wrap brass sillcock/bibb with teflon tape and apply a bead of silicone caulk around the threads
- Screw bibb into the barrel being careful to keep straight

Inlet

- Cut a hole in the top of the barrel using a large bit or hole saw
- Insert jigsaw and cut away an opening at least large enough for the end of a drain spout
- Cover opening with window screening, secure with rope or twine

Overflow

- Cut a hole in the side of the barrel about 3" from the top using 1- 5/8" bit or hole saw
- Slide one end of the sump pump hose onto the adapter insert, fasten with hose clamp
- Apply silicone caulk to the adapter insert, slide into hole in barrel
- Screw lock nut onto the threads on the adapter insert

Use cinderblocks or similar pavers to elevate the completed rain barrel off the ground to ensure easier access to the hose bibb and to facilitate gravity-fed drainage.

Here's what you'll need:

55-gallon barrel
6 ft. - 1 1/4" sump pump hose
1 1/4" adapter insert
1 1/4" lock nut
3/4"-1 3/4" Hose clamp
Fiberglass window screening
3/4" Brass Sillcock/hose bibb
1 5/8" hole saw or bit
1" hole saw or bit
Drill
Jigsaw
Silicone caulk
Teflon tape

