

HOW TO

BUILD A RAIN BARREL

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- 1 large plastic garbage can (the larger it is, the more water you can collect)
- 1 tube of water-tight sealant or roll of Teflon tape for plumbing
- 2 rubber washers
- 2 metal washers
- 1 hose clamp
- 1 spigot
- A drill
- Landscaping fabric

A rain barrel is a small-scale conservation practice that collects and stores rooftop runoff for future use to water lawns and gardens. It is estimated that during summer months, nearly 40 percent of household water is used for lawn and garden watering. Using a rain barrel may save the average homeowner up to 1,300 gallons of water during peak summer months.

Using a rain barrel on your property not only helps to reduce stormwater runoff, but also to conserve drinking water resources. Ready-made rain barrels are available from an assortment of companies. However, constructing a rain barrel from readily available materials is an affordable and equally effective alternative.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Use the drill to create a hole near the bottom of the barrel, where the spigot will go. The drill bit should be a little smaller than or the same size as the spigot. The hole should be high enough that you can fill a watering can.
2. Place a metal washer onto the threaded end of the spigot, then place a snugly fitting rubber washer over the threads to hold the washer in place and prevent leakage. Apply a bead of waterproof sealant over the rubber washer and insert the spigot into the hole. Alternatively, use watertight Teflon tape to seal the spigot hole.
3. Once sealant is dry, run a rubber washer followed by a metal washer onto the threads of the spigot inside the barrel. Secure the spigot with the hose clamp.
4. Cut a hole large enough to accommodate the water flow from the downspout in the lid of the rain barrel. The hole should sit under the downspout so the water runs into the barrel.
5. Drill a hole or two near the top on the side of your rain barrel to allow water to overflow. You can run a short length of hose or PVC pipe from the overflow hole to to another rain barrel. Excess water will travel into the adjacent barrel without losing overflow water.
6. Cut a piece of landscaping fabric to sit over the opening, then put the lid over the top of it to secure it. This will create a barrier that prevents mosquitoes and other pests from living in the rain barrel water.
7. Position the rain barrel directly underneath the downspout in a spot that's most convenient to use it. Set your rain barrel up on a platform to help give more pressure if you connect it to a hose.

For more information on nonpoint source pollution and stormwater management, please call the Maryland Department of the Environment, Water Management Administration at (410) 537-3543, or visit our website at www.mde.state.md.us

