

# RAIN BARRELS

## INFORMATION AND GUIDE

### Function and Uses

- Typically made from a 50- to 80-gallon plastic barrel that sits underneath a downspout to collect water from the roof during each rain event.
- Use to water your lawn or plants, wash your cars, or clean tools and boots.
- Water is **not** for consumption.

### Maintenance

- Drain and disconnect the barrel in the winter. Freezing and thawing can cause cracks. Clean out screens and the tank periodically to remove debris.
- Lead the overflow hose away from the building to an existing garden or rain garden to receive the excess water.

### Contamination

- The water collected from the roof can contain leaf litter, bird droppings, and chemicals from roof material.
- It is best to use the water on inedible plants such as the lawn, flowers, shrubs, or trees.

### Benefits

1. Save drinking water resources. On average, nearly 30 percent of our daily water use is attributed to lawn and garden care. Collecting water from rain events decreases the amount of treated drinking water used to water plants. Clean, fresh water is a limited, precious resource!
2. Save on water and sewer bills. Capturing rainwater keeps money in your pocket by reducing the amount of water needed from municipal sources.
3. Provide water during droughts. Rain barrels can provide free and easy access to water during times with limited water.
4. Better to use untreated water. Water collected from rain events is usually better for plants than treated water (which often contains chlorine).
5. Reduce pollution. Pollution is created as rainwater passes over land surfaces and picks up contaminants (e.g., motor oil residue, road salt, fertilizers, and pesticides) en route to our local streams and rivers. Capture that water in a rain barrel before it gets polluted and causes problems.
6. Prevent soil erosion. Slowing the flow and volume of gutter runoff reduces soil erosion that can damage the home foundation and remove nutrient-rich topsoil.



## Examples

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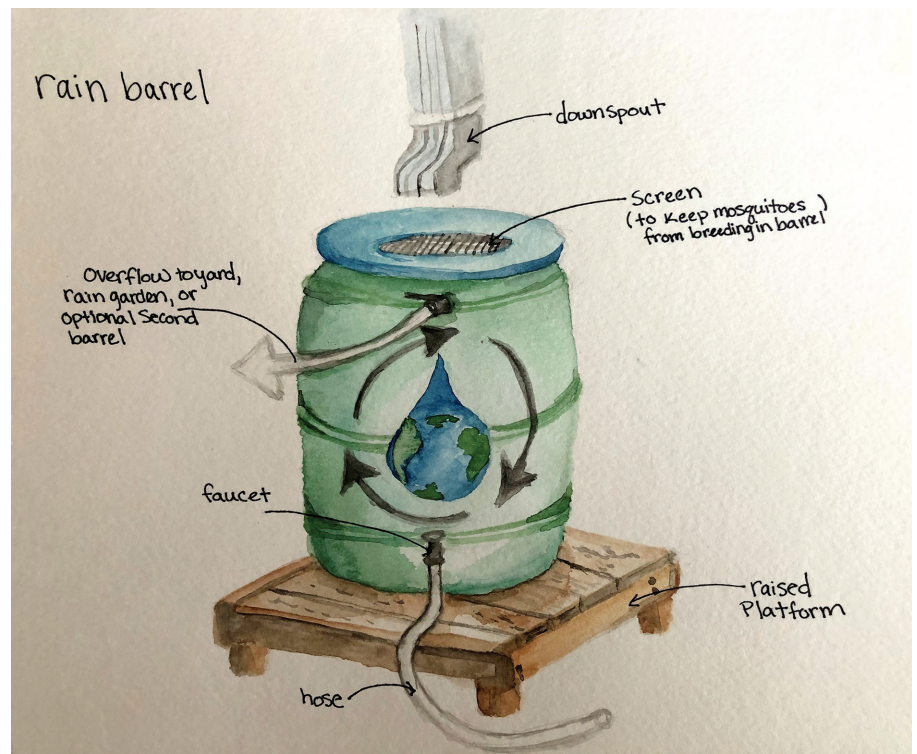
## Design/Parts

Typical rain barrel design includes:

- Hole at the top to allow water to flow in from a downspout
- Sealed lid
- Screen
- Overflow outlet
- Spigot or faucet at or near the bottom of the barrel
- Garden hose connecting to spigot or faucet
- Raised platform to sit the barrel on to increase pressure

Credit:  
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