

## Saving From a Rainy Day - Making a Rain Barrel

Rainwater harvesting is an innovative approach of capturing free water. You can save money by collecting and storing rainwater and using it to irrigate your trees, shrubs and flower beds. An easy way to do this is by constructing a rain barrel.

### Material List

- (1) Large garbage can or 55 gallon food grade poly barrel
- (1) 3/4 inch outdoor faucet or hose bib
- (1) 3/4 inch female threaded PVC pipe adapter
- (1) 3/4 inch rubber washer
- (1) Roll Teflon tape
- (1) Roll window screen fabric
- (1) Tube pipe goop or silicone sealer/cement
- (4) 1/4 inch screws to attach screen to lid
- (4) Cinder blocks to keep barrel off the ground
- Rain gutter downspout elbow or 2 flexible downspouts

### Tools

- |  |                                  |
|--|----------------------------------|
| Jig Saw, Jab Saw or Dry Wall Saw       | Power Drill                      |
| 3/4 inch Spade Bit or Hole Saw/cutter  | 2 inch Hole Saw                  |
| Scissors to cut window screen          | 2 Pipe Wrenches or channel locks |
| Screw Driver or drill screw driver bit | Hack Saw or PVC Pipe Cutter      |
| Tape Measure                           | Level                            |

### Barrel Preparation

1. Use a recycled food grade opaque container (the 55 gallon blue barrels are available at Russell Feed Stores and Marshall Grain) or a heavy garbage can. Clean the container.
2. Close to the bottom, drill or cut a 3/4 hole for the faucet,
3. Stick the faucet thread into the barrel and attach the faucet using the 3/4 female PVC adapter and 3/4 inch rubber washer. This may require 2 people, one lying in the barrel and one on the outside holding the faucet. Use Teflon tape on the faucet threads.
4. Near the top of the side of the barrel, cut a 2 inch hole. Cover the 2 inch hole with window screen secured with pipe goop or silicone sealer. This screen will keep mosquitoes and other insects out of the barrel. OR use the 2 inch male and female adapters, (2) 2 inch elbows and 2 inch PVC pipe to create a down spout.
5. Cut a 6 inch hole in the lid of the garbage can or barrel lid. Use the drill to create a hole large enough for the saw blade.
6. Cover the 6 inch hole in the lid with window screen secured with pipe goop and screws. If the rain barrel is going to sit under a roof valley, place the window screen over the entire top of the barrel and secure with a strap.



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7. Level the soil where the barrel will stand.
8. Place cinder blocks and check level again. Water is heavy. The slightest lean may mean a falling barrel. Gravity is needed to run the water. If the area where you want to use the water is higher than the barrel, use more cedar blocks to raise the barrel.
9. Cut the downspout so water will go directly into the barrel. Use downspout gutter elbow (or 2) to better direct the water into the barrel opening. Or use flexible downspout to direct water into barrel. Use screws and silicone sealer at each attachment.
10. Attach the garden hose to the faucet. If you want to use a garden hose and drip irrigation, attach a 2-faucet manifold to the faucet.

### Rain Barrel Location

Locate the rain barrel near a rain gutter downspout or where a roof valley sheds a large amount of water and on the side of the house where you want to use the rainwater for irrigation or hand watering.

### Optional:

If you want more than one rain barrel connect the barrels using 2 inch PVC pipe and male and female adapters. Have the water go into the first rain barrel. Use the over flow hole to attach the pipe to the second rain barrel. Have an overflow opening on the second rain barrel.

Manifold with two hose attachments with shutoffs to direct overflow from barrel

- (1) 10 foot length of 2 inch PVC pipe
- (2) 2 inch PVC elbow
- (1) 2 inch female PVC pipe adapter
- (1) 2 inch male pipe adapter

For more information on water conservation and efficiency practices for your home and landscape as well as information on larger rainwater collection systems visit the Texas AgriLife Extension Web site <http://rainwaterharvesting.tamu.edu>