

What is a Rain Barrel?

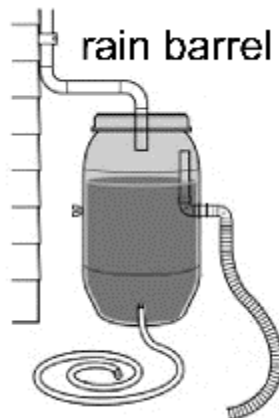
What is a Rain Barrel?

A rain barrel is a system that collects and stores rainwater from your roof that would otherwise be lost to runoff and diverted to storm drains and streams. Usually a rain barrel is composed of a 55 gallon drum, a vinyl hose, PVC couplings, a screen grate to keep debris and insects out, and other off-the-shelf items, a rain barrel is relatively simple and inexpensive to construct and can sit conveniently under any residential gutter down spout.

What are the advantages of a rain barrel?

Lawn and garden watering make up nearly 40% of total household water use during the summer. A rain barrel collects water and stores it for when you need it most -- during periods of drought -- to water plants, wash your car, or to top a swimming pool. It provides an ample supply of free "soft water" to homeowners, containing no chlorine, lime or calcium making it ideal for gardens, flower pots, and car and window washing.

A rain barrel will save most homeowners about 1,300 gallons of water during the peak summer months. Saving water not only helps protect the environment, it saves you money and energy (decreased demand for treated tap water). Diverting water from storm drains also decreases the impact of runoff to streams. Therefore, a rain barrel is an easy way for you to have a consistent supply of clean, fresh water for outdoor use, FREE.



Where can I purchase a ready-made rain barrel?

Ready-made rain barrels can be purchased from numerous companies. Below are just a few (Listing does not constitute an endorsement by the Department of Natural Resources or the State of Maryland or the US Environmental Protection Agency):

D&P Industries Incorporated (DPI) produces the Urban Rain Barrel. (503) 286-9866. <http://www.therainbarrel.com/index.html>

Spruce Creek Company produces the Spruce Creek Rainsaver. (800) 940-0187. <http://www.sprucecreekrainsaver.com/>

Gaiam Produces the Ecoliving Rain Barrel (877) 989-6321 <http://www.gaiam.com/>

Urban Garden Center sells rain barrels (866) 560-4400 <http://www.composters.info>

Source: This rain barrel information was obtained and edited from the Maryland Green Building Program website located at <http://www.dnr.state.md.us/smartgrowth/greenbuilding/rainbarrel.html>