

Rain Barrel Benefits

Reduce Runoff. Stormwater runoff is the number one cause of pollution in our streams today. Stormwater runoff carries fertilizers, pesticides and other chemicals into local streams, and also causes erosion. Rain barrels help you reduce stormwater runoff. If your roof's area is 1,200 square feet (30 x 40 feet), then 1 inch of rain equals more than **700 gallons of rooftop runoff!** An overflow hose located at the top of the barrel directs the excess water from your barrel to a garden or to an area where it can slowly soak into the ground.

Healthy Water for Your Plants. Rainwater has no added chemicals, is usually soft and free of dissolved minerals. This untreated water is great for your indoor plants, your garden and lawn, washing your car, and your birdbaths.

Conserve Water. Drought or no drought, we should all conserve water. Our groundwater and fresh water supplies are limited. So, make the most of the rain and capture some of it to reuse in your garden!

Save Money. Why pay to water your garden with tap water when you can collect hundreds of gallons at no cost?

Rain Barrel Program Partners

Arlingtonians for a Clean Environment

Arlington County

City of Alexandria

City of Falls Church

Clean Virginia Waterways

Fairfax County Park Authority

Northern Virginia Soil and Water Conservation District

Reston Association

Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation

<http://arlingtonenvironment.org/rainbarrel>



There are many ways to connect one barrel to another. Here, we used some plastic tubing and hose clamps.

When you get your rain barrel home....



Rain Barrel Installation Instructions

Step 1. Purchase some 1 ½ inch sump pump hose at the hardware store to connect to the overflow hole. You will probably need at least ten feet of hose.



Step 2. Prepare the area under your downspout for the barrel. Remove the splash block and level the ground under the downspout by adding sand or gravel.



Step 3. Rain barrels need to be higher than ground level. A higher barrel = higher water pressure. Use bricks, cinder blocks, or pressure treated wood to create a platform.



(Note: water is heavy!)

Step 4. Measure twice, cut once! Use a hacksaw to cut off part of downspout. Leave space to reattach the downspout end-piece.



Step 5. Put the barrel in place, with the top ring and mosquito screening on top. Re-attach the curved downspout end-piece to the downspout.



Other Rain Barrel Tips

- Do not use rain barrel water for cooking or drinking.
- Keep the window screening on your barrel to prevent mosquitoes, and add a mosquito “dunk” to the barrel (available at pet stores or online).
- Do not collect rain water if you use a moss-killer on your roof.
- Disconnect the barrel in winter.
- Use the water before the next rain or within a week, or connect the faucet to a soaker hose in your garden.