What Is A Rain Barrel?

A Rain Barrel is a small storage tank that collects rainwater from rooftop gutter downspouts that would otherwise be lost to runoff and stores it for non-potable use, such as for watering lawns and gardens.

Types of Rain Barrels

A typical residential Rain Barrel consists of a 40 to 55 gallon container, usually made of plastic or wood, with a screen for catching leaves and debris, and some type of spigot for attaching a series of pipes or hoses to distribute water as needed. Ceramic, glass and bricks are not normally used as they are heavier and harder to handle. Rain Barrels should be easy to move to other locations if needed.

Benefits of Rain Barrels

- *Stored water from rainfall can be used during dry periods.*
- *Rain water is free from chlorine and hardness additives.*
- *Reduces the impacts of stormwater runoff.*
- *Lessens the demand on municipal water supplies.*
- *Rain Barrel drip irrigation is more efficient for watering garden plants.*
- *Rain Barrels encourage and inspire environmental protection and stewardship in others.*

Rain Barrel Costs

Rain Barrels can be as simple as a plastic garbage can underneath a gutter downspout. Homemade barrels are best constructed from wood or plastic. The cost of homemade barrels with simple screens, spigots and pipes is around **$60 to $120**.

Vendor-supplied barrels are preferred because they are constructed specifically for use as Rain Barrels, and they have the proper openings, spigots, screens and other supplies. Purchased barrel kits can cost **$100 to $200**.

Additional Supply Costs:

In addition to the cost of the barrel, accessory supplies may be needed:

- *Leaf and debris screens (~$15)*
- *Cleaning supplies (~$15)*
- *Water distribution lines (~$25)*
- *Spigot / water outlet (~$20)*
- *Gutter connections (~$10)*
- *Brick, stone, boards for base (~$30)*
- *Pump, electrical cord, outlet (~$70).*

Many organizations and municipalities offer Rain Barrel kits at discounts or sometimes for free. Some include all supplies needed for installation. Ask!

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EPA

Green Country Stormwater Alliance
Give Clean Water a Helping Hand

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www.stormwaterOK.net

Rain Barrels

Practical Water Conservation for Your Home

For More Information on LID or GCSA

Contact INCOG at (918) 584-7526 or email at stormwater@incog.org

A Closer Look at

Rain Barrels

Rain Barrel Supplies

In addition to storing collected rainwater, Rain Barrels must filter out leaves and trash and have a way to distribute the stored water. This can be either through gravity flow via pipes or with an electrical pump. The gravity system is much preferred for reduced cost and maintenance.

Typical Rain Barrel supplies are:

- *Gutter extensions and connectors*
- *Screens for leaves and debris*
- *Outlets such as spigots*
- *Distribution pipes and hoses*
- *Boards, bricks or stones for base*
- *Pump with electrical cords*
- *Brushes and cleaning supplies*

Do-It-Yourself Rain Barrels

Rain Barrels are deceptively complicated; they need adequate filtration, access for maintenance, stability, good sealed connections, valves, perhaps pumps, distribution lines, etc. Vendor supplied barrel kits take all factors into account, making them affordable and easy to install and maintain.

Rain Barrel Vendors

Purchasing Rain Barrels and supplies has gotten much easier. It is common to find discounted and free barrels and complete kits. To find barrel and supply vendors, contact:

- *Hardware and garden supply stores*
- *Home improvement centers*
- *Internet shopping websites*
- *Non-profit organizations & Trusts*
- *Municipal Public Works*
- *Household Pollutant collectors*
- *Schools and youth organizations*

Rain Barrel Limitations

Rain Barrels have limited capacity. They capture and distribute rainwater most often during higher rainfall periods when use of stored water is not needed as much. Storing captured rainwater requires removal of accumulated leaves and sediment to control excess growth of bacteria & mosquito breeding. Rain barrels themselves cannot eliminate all property runoff; they should be integrated into a comprehensive stormwater management program.

Rain Barrel Maintenance

Leaf filtering screens must be kept free of accumulated matter. The pumping and distribution systems need to be kept unclogged to work effectively. Mosquitoes can be controlled by draining the barrel within 10 days of filling or by using a larval pesticide. Ensure that the base is level and sturdy.

Local Codes and Permits

While arid states may restrict rainwater capture, Oklahoma passed the Water for 2060 Act in 2012 to promote pilot projects for rainwater and gray-water use. Local codes may affect use of Rain Barrels, including subdivision regulations, zoning and building codes, subdivision covenants, and Homeowners Association restrictions. Contact your local municipal planning officials about any restrictions that may apply.

This brochure is not intended to provide complete guidance on Rain Barrel materials, design, costs or construction. It is intended for general information purposes only.