

What is a Rain Barrel?

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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 used to collect rooftop runoff using a gutter / downspout system

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 buy a ready-made rain barrel?

Ready-made rain barrels can be purchased from a number of companies, including hardware stores and garden supply stores. In addition, local governments sometimes offer them for a reduced price as part of their environmental education programs. Below are just a few sources (this listing does not constitute an endorsement by EPA). All links below exit EPA.

- [Ace Hardware](#) has a couple of models, 866-290-5334
- [Gaiam](#) produces the Great American Rain Barrel, 877-989-6321
- [Plow & Hearth](#) has several rain barrels including a pop-up barrel that folds flat when not needed, 800-494-7544
- [Rain Barrel Source](#) offers an extra large system, 866-912-9719
- [Spruce Creek Company](#) produces the Spruce Creek Rainsaver, 800-940-0187
- [Urban Garden Center](#) sells the Urban Rain Barrel, 866-923-1992