

Rain Barrel FAQs

How do I install the rain barrel?

First, you need to create a level, compacted base for the rain barrel. Next, you need to measure and cut your downspout to accommodate the rain barrel. Normally, you will have a 90° bend at the bottom of your downspout. You will need to remove this bend and reinstall it on your downspout so that it rests on the lid of the rain barrel. That's about it. This is the most common installation method. There are other methods. If you don't have gutters or downspouts, then you can locate the rain barrel where a roof valley discharges.

What kind of bases are good for the rain barrel?

As long as the base is level and sturdy, you can use whatever you have available to create the base. Remember the rain barrel will weigh about 500 pounds when it is full so the base needs to be able to carry this amount of weight. Normally, concrete cinder blocks can be used to provide you with this level, sturdy base.

How do I get the water out of the rain barrel?

Most rain barrels come equipped with some sort of outlet near the bottom of the barrel. You can elevate your rain barrel enough to fit a watering can under it. Another way is to attach a soaker hose to the outlet and trail this soaker hose through your landscaping and the rainwater will slowly seep out over time. In addition, you can purchase a small pump from any home & garden store and attach it to the outlet. This will allow you to use the rainwater a good distance from the rain barrel with a normal garden hose and spray nozzle.

Where does the rainwater go when the rain barrel fills up?

Most rain barrels are equipped with an overflow port and hose which will allow you to direct the overflow away from your house foundation.

Do I have to worry about mosquitoes or other insects?

Most rain barrels have some sort of screen where the rainwater enters the rain barrel. This screen will prevent mosquitoes from reaching the water surface. Now, mosquito larvae may be in the stagnant water that may be in your gutters. If this water makes it way to the rain barrel, the mosquito larvae will go through the screen. Once these mosquitoes hatch, they will be trapped so they will eventually die. If you like, you can put mosquito dunks in your rain barrel. They can be purchased at any home & garden store.

The water in my rain barrel smells bad and looks like it has algae in it. What should I do?

Algae is normally the culprit for smelly water. Since rain barrels are typically open on top to the sky, sunlight can easily reach the water. Algae needs nutrients in the water and sunlight to bloom. The answer is to use the rainwater in your rain barrel in a timely manner. If you have rainwater available, use it. This will empty the rain barrel and prevent algae from forming. Anyway, a full rain barrel does you no good when another storm is on the horizon.