

# How to Install a Rain Barrel

## Tools & Supplies

- Hacksaw
- Garden hose
- Gravel or sand (not pictured)
- Cinderblocks (2-4)
- Level
- Pencil
- Flexible downspout or elbow
- Flashing or cardboard



### Step 1: Prepare Base

Select a flat area under a downspout. Use **gravel** or **sand** to level the area. Place the **cinderblocks** under the downspout. Use a **level** to make sure barrel will sit flat on the cinderblocks. **WARNING:** A full barrel can weigh over 400 lbs. and can present a hazard if not completely level.

### Step 2: Cut Downspout

Measure height of the barrel to make sure downspout is cut high enough to accommodate the barrel. Mark the cut line with a **pencil**. Place **flashing** or **cardboard** behind the downspout before cutting to protect home exterior. Use a **hacksaw** to cut the downspout. Place the barrel on **cinderblocks** beneath the cut downspout. Attach the flexible downspout or elbow to the end of the cut downspout and direct it towards the inflow. Attach a **garden hose** to the overflow and direct it away from the house and impervious surface (not pictured).



## About NJWSA

The New Jersey Water Supply Authority was formed in 1981 to manage Spruce Run and Round Valley Reservoirs, Manasquan Reservoir and the Delaware & Raritan Canal as potable water supplies. The Watershed Protection Unit works with stakeholders within the Raritan Basin to protect these water supplies.

For more information about rain barrels, please contact:

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## Tips for Rain Barrels

- Take rain barrel offline during winter months to avoid ice damage.
- Paint rain barrel to individualize your work or just to simply match your house.
- Additional mosquito breeding prevention techniques include: products like Mosquito Dunks, or adding 1 tbsp. of vegetable oil or dish soap.
- Have water tested before use if water is intended for vegetable gardens or if moss killer has recently been applied to the roof.

## How to Build and Install a Rain Barrel



## Keep the Rain from the Drain!

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## What is a Rain Barrel?

A rain barrel is a modified barrel that stores rainwater collected from a roof. The barrel is hooked up to the gutter and downspout and helps reduce potable water usage, stormwater runoff and nonpoint source pollution.

## Why Install a Rain Barrel?

Typically, after water lands on a roof, it will flow down the downspout and into the street where it can pick up pollutants like sediment, oil and other heavy metals from cars and trucks, and nutrients and bacteria from animal waste and carry them to the stream. Water captured in rain barrels can be used to water lawns and ornamental plants, wash cars or dirty boots, and for other times when potable water is not necessary. The usage of rain barrels helps to infiltrate stormwater instead of becoming runoff.

## Tools & Supplies Needed

- Protective eyewear
- 8" Groove joint pliers
- Work gloves
- 8" Adjustable wrench
- Rubber gloves
- Reciprocating saw or jigsaw
- Power drill with 1" hole saw
- Ruler
- Scissors



**Step 1: Inflow** Wearing safety gloves and glasses, use the **jigsaw** to cut a hole in the top of the barrel where rainwater will enter the barrel. The hole must be measured to accommodate the **basket** or **colander** that will be inserted into the inflow to keep insects and debris out. NOTE: This step may not be necessary for certain types of barrels with screw on tops or predrilled inflows.

**Step 2: Faucet** For screw top barrels, use the **power drill with 1" hole saw** to drill a hole 6-8" from the bottom of the barrel. For a closed-top barrel, you will need to measure how far down you are able to reach into the barrel to apply **sealant** and attach the **locknut** to the faucet. Wrap **Teflon tape** around the threaded end of the **brass faucet** that will be inserted in the barrel two times in the opposite direction of the threads. Screw the **faucet** into barrel so that no thread is showing and the faucet is perpendicular to the barrel, using an **adjustable wrench** if necessary.



## Step 3: Sealing/Locking Faucet

Wearing **rubber gloves**, apply **sealant** around the threaded end of faucet inside barrel. Begin tightening the **locknut** by hand onto the **faucet**. Tighten the rest of the way using the **groove joint pliers**. TIP: Have a friend hold faucet on outside to ensure it remains perpendicular to barrel as the **locknut** is tightened.



**Step 4: Overflow** Using the **power drill with 1" hole saw**, drill a hole on the side of the barrel, just below the depth of the **basket** when placed in the inflow. NOTE: Think about where you would like to direct the overflow. Be sure to direct the overflow away from house and foundation.



Wrap **Teflon tape** around longer end of the **brass garden hose adapter** two times counterclockwise. Screw the long end of the **brass garden hose adapter** into the hole on the side of the barrel, using an **adjustable wrench**, if necessary. Wearing **rubber gloves**, apply **sealant** around the threaded end inside the barrel. Begin tightening the **locknut** by hand onto the **faucet**. Tighten the rest of the way using the **groove joint pliers**.



## Step 5: Screening

Wrap **gray window screen** around the **pond basket** or **colander** and insert into the inflow to keep out debris and insects. Check basket and screen after rain events for debris and ensure screen is covering inflow.



Barrels can be found from a wide range of suppliers, including online searches and local food and beverage distributors. Supplies, tools and kits are available at most hardware stores.