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Virginia
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A partnership of Virginia Tech and Virginia State University www.ext.vt.edu



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Installing and Maintaining YOUR RAIN BARREL

Additional Information and Resources

Help Conserve Water by:

- Installing a rain garden
- Install soaker hoses
- Increase water pressure by installing a pump in “daisy-chained” rain barrels
- Install drought resistant landscaping or practice xeriscaping
- Install a cistern

Downspout Diverter Options

www.gutterworks.com

www.sprucecreekrainsaver.com

www.baytecontainers.com

More Assembly Information

www.walterreeves.com

www.rwmwd.org

www.rainbarrelguide.com



Decide where you want to install your rain barrel and how it will be used.

- Notice if your yard slopes down considerably from where you want to install the barrel and make sure the barrel is level.
- Will you want to attach a soaker hose to the bibb or a long garden hose? Water pressure is at the mercy of gravity. You may want to install a small pump.
- Barrel(s) should be placed high enough off the ground (at least a foot or more) for good pressure. Bases should be strong and sturdy enough to support 450+ lbs.
- Will you “daisy chain” 2 or more rain barrels? If so, you need to make sure there is enough room.
- If 2 or more barrels are connected to each other, make sure the last barrel has an overflow hole near the top of the barrel. Ideally, a hose connected to this hole will help divert water away from the house foundation.
- If you do not have gutters and do not wish to install them, place the rain barrel directly under an area of the roof that sheds a lot of water.



Place a block behind the gutter before cutting



No gutters, no problem. Place rain barrel under here



Daisy-chained rain barrels



Barrels may also be linked at the bottom.

Rain Barrel Maintenance

- Use only food quality containers. These barrels should be rinsed and cleaned with a mixture of 1/8 cup of bleach and 5 gals. of water. Rinse thoroughly to remove any plastics from drilling or sawing.
- If mosquitoes are still a problem after using a screen, you may add a mosquito ring once a month to your barrel.
- If you notice an odor or algae growth, consult a pond or garden center for additives that will eliminate algae without harming your plants.
- A hard freeze may damage your barrel. Drain all water from your barrel. You might consider adding a drain plug at the very bottom for drainage or moving your barrel from the downspout during winter. Add a flexible downspout to redirect water away from your home.
- Inspect your rain barrel at least once a year for needed repairs or loose connections.
- **CAUTION:** This water is not for drinking purposes! Also, if your roof has been chemically treated, do not use this water for edible plants. Consider having your water tested for harmful chemicals before using on edible plants.