

Common Rain Barrel Questions

Are the barrels new?

These are USED barrels. They will have some scuff marks and scratches from shipping and handling. Each barrel is inspected, cleaned, and modified. There are no significant scuffs or scratches which would harm the structural integrity of the barrel and lead to any leakage. The spigot is installed on the nicer looking face of the barrel.

How are the lids held onto the barrel?

The lids screw on and hold the cap in place in some models. In others, the lids and screen are held on with a galvanized (won't rust) lock ring.

Why are there so many holes in the lids?

Multiple holes in the cap are for best collection of water.

Why is there a screen in the lid?

The screen is to keep mosquitoes and debris out while letting the water flow freely into the barrel.

What kind of spigots and fittings are used on the barrels?

Acetal plastic spigot for the faucet and poly fittings for the linking and overflow hoses.

How much water pressure does a rain barrel have?

To water from your rain barrel you can use a garden hose, landscape tubing (just drill holes into the tubing near the plant) or drip tubing. You will not be able to run a sprinkler or a soaker hose from the rain barrel. But as long as you are not trying to go up hill you can go any distance from the barrel you need to, water seeks its own level, so it will always be flowing to the lowest level the hose is at.

You can water hanging pots with a garden hose. Start with the hose on the ground then lift it to the plant, it will have enough pressure to water 2-3 pots. You need to lower the hose to get the pressure back to water additional hanging pots.

Do I need to remove the fittings for winter?

The barrels are meant to be left outside during winter. You do not need to remove the fittings for winter. Plastic fittings are used because brass and steel do not interface well with plastic barrels. These items expand and contract at a different rate, which is the major cause of other manufacturer's barrels leaking in a short period of time. The only thing you need to do to prepare for the winter season is to drain all the water out, remove the linking fitting cap, and open the spigot so water drains during the winter. (If the barrel fills with water and freezes it will crack).

What is the purpose of the linking and overflow fittings?

The linking fitting allows the user to connect multiple barrels together for even more free water. The overflow fitting allows the homeowner to direct water away from their home after the barrel is full.

Can I paint the barrels?

The barrels are not painted. If you want to change or enhance the color of your barrel there are two products recommended. The first is Ace Hardware brand spray paint, and the second is Krylon brand spray paint. Both do an excellent job on plastic and will not peel for years to come.

How do I decide what size barrel to order and where to place it?

Where is the best location to collect the water from - a tool shed roof can work as well as a house roof to collect water. A 4' X 8' sheet of plywood that receives ¼" of rain will fill a 55-gallon barrel. Then look at the surrounding area. If you want to put your rain barrel around the corner from where the downspout is, a flex hose can be installed to direct water from the downspout around the corner to the barrel.

Is there any assembly required?

All fittings are shipped inside the barrel and include instructions to install them into the predrilled and threaded holes.

What installation is required to attach the rain barrel to my downspout?

You should build your barrel up about 12" off the ground using the available accessory Pedestal Riser or you can use cinderblock or old landscape timbers-anything that will hold the filled barrel weight of approximately 600 pounds.

Basic installation requires you to cut the gutter 8 inches above the top of the barrel and attach the downspout elbow so it dispenses the water directly into the top of the barrel. Then attach a garden hose to the overflow fitting on the top section of the barrel so when it is full the additional water can be diverted away from the foundation of your house and keep the water level below the screening. If you have gutters that go directly into the ground use the Automatic Diverter to hook up your barrel.

You can link 2 or more barrels together using a Linking Hose. All barrels have a linking hose fitting on the bottom section, just unscrew the cap and screw on the linking hose. All the barrels will fill with water with only 1 downspout being modified and significantly reduce the amount of water going out the overflow.

Is there a warranty on the rain barrels?

Yes, Upcycle Products rain barrels carry a 5-year warranty on materials and workmanship. The only way this warranty can be voided is if you leave the barrel out during the winter without opening the spigot and linking hose fitting - if the barrel fills with water and freezes the barrel will crack.

Disclaimer

With proper installation, maintenance and use, rain barrels should function properly. The Washtenaw County Conservation District assumes no liability for the installation, maintenance, property damage or injury that may be associated with the use of rain barrels.