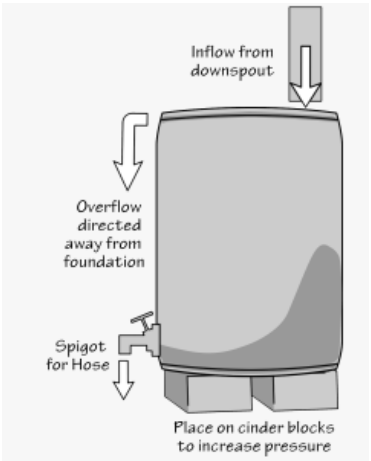
Rain Barrel Factsheet

What is a Rain Barrel?

A rain barrel is an above-ground cistern or container that attaches to a downspout, harvests rain water from a roof, and stores the water for later use. The stored water can be used to water plants and animals. Rain barrels are made from various materials, and come in different sizes and colors. Licking Soil & Water rain barrels are durable food-grade plastic, 55-gallons, and white in color.



How Do Rain Barrels Help the Environment?

Rain barrels reduce runoff. When it rains, roof water travels down gutters and often runs off lawns faster than it can infiltrate the soil. In many cases, downspouts drain directly into the street. Utilizing a rain barrel will allow the water to be stored for later use, rather than letting the water runoff the property and quickly enter rivers and streams

Rain barrels conserve water. Rainfall patterns are quite variable and often inconsistent in different seasons. During below normal rainfall periods, some communities have imposed water use restrictions (e.g. watering lawns and gardens, washing cars, etc.). A rain barrel, or a system of rain barrels, can provide the homeowner with a non-potable water source during dry spells and drought.

Tips for Rain Barrel Success:

- Remember rain water is not potable (not for drinking, cooking or bathing).
- Maintain the screen(s) on the intake & overflow pipe and replace if ripped or missing. These screens prevent mosquitos from getting in and breed
- Keep the screened opening(s) free of leaves and debris.
- Maintain a tight seal around inlet and outlet pipes.
- Use a flexible downspout connector for easy connection and disconnection.
- Disconnect and drain the barrel during winter months to avoid freezing and cracking.
- Use a UV clear-coat plastic spray paint to protect plastic barrel from the sun's harmful rays.
- Elevate the rain barrel for easier spigot access and to increase water pressure.
- If your rain barrel develops algae build-up, rinse with a 3/4 cup bleach—1 gallon water solution.

How to Handle the Overflow:

Your rain barrel will fill up quickly and must be equipped with an overflow system. The overflow pipe should be directed away from your foundation and into a grassy area or rain garden.

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Calculating Your Rain Barrel Needs

What Size Rain Barrel Do I Need?

If you are just starting out and want a simple system, we recommend using one 55-gallon barrel. Additional barrels can be added depending on the size of garden or yard, or other intended uses.

Determining Your Watering Needs:

1) Measure the area of your roof (length x width).
2) Multiple the result by the depth of water (in inches) desired for watering.
3) Multiple the result by 0.6*. (*1 square foot area x 1" rain = approximately 0.6 gallons).
4) The result equals the number of gallons of water that you want to collect.

Example: How many gallons of water do I need to water a garden that is 10 ft. wide by 35 ft. long with a quarter inch of water?

- Garden area = 10' x 35' = 350 sqft
- Desired Depth of Water = 0.25"
- Garden Area x Desired Depth of Water x 0.6
- (350 sqft) x (0.25") x 0.6 = **52.5 gallons**

Determining Water Yield from Your Rooftop:

1) Measure the area of your roof (length x width).
2) Multiply the result by the amount of rainfall (in inches).
3) Multiply the result by 0.6*. (*1 square foot area x 1" rain = approximately 0.6 gallons).
4) The result equals the number of gallons that will drain from your roof.

Example: How many gallons of rain water will drain from my 24 ft. by 20 ft. roof after a quarter inch of rain?

- Roof area = 24' x 20' = 480 sq. ft.
- Rainfall = 0.25"
- Roof area x Rainfall x 0.6
- 480 sq.ft. x 0.25" x 0.6 = **72 gallons**

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For more information, contact Licking County Soil and Water Conservation District
740-670-5330 · information@LickingSWCD.com
771 East Main St., Suite 100, Newark, OH 43055