



Typical top with screen, with downspout elbow



Diverter



Stable, raised base

Rain Barrel Installation and Care

Installation

- Create a level, stable base that elevates the rain barrel a few feet. Concrete blocks or a wooden frame are commonly used. Most rain barrels weigh over 400 pounds when they're full of water, so make sure the barrel will not fall.
- Measure and cut the existing downspout with a hacksaw and attach an elbow directing water into the barrel OR install a diverter that diverts water into the barrel.
- Make sure the overflow directs excess water at least 10 feet away from your home's foundation.
- Enjoy the free water!

Care

- Remove leaves and other debris from the screen where water enters the barrel once a week or after it rains. Keep on top of cleaning gutters.
- Periodically check to make sure mosquitoes cannot get into the barrel.
- Algae growth is uncommon, but can happen if the water sits too long. Sunlight increases the chance of algae growth, so light-colored barrels and sunny locations make algae more likely. If you notice algae growth inside the barrel, drain it and scrub it with a weak bleach-water solution.

Winterization

Drain the rain barrel before the first hard freeze, and give the barrel and all parts a once-over. Prevent damage from water freezing inside the rain barrel or spigot by removing the barrel and either turning it upside down or storing it inside. Reconnect a downspout or temporary pipe to drain the water at least 10 feet from your house.

If you have a diverter, simply set the diverter to bypass the rain barrel, and leave the spigot open.

Provided by the Elkhart County SWCD

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