

Tips on Painting (from Nancy Brown)

1. Clean the barrel with warm soapy water and baking soda.
2. Use fine grit sand paper on the outside surface. This helps the paint stick, but also smoothes out any shallow cuts that may be on the barrel.
3. If you are going to use acrylics, apply a coat of bonding primer next.
4. Paint until you are happy.
5. Allow enough time for it to dry completely.
6. I recommend a clear coat seal to protect your artwork. You may be able to get a local body shop to clear coat it with automotive paint. You can also do it yourself with the clear coating that comes in a spray can.

Using artist's oils is not recommended. Basically they "never" completely dry, and you cannot seal them like acrylics.

You can use the new specialty spray paints for plastics. I have done so without applying a primer first and it seems to work well. Be sure to follow the manufacturer's directions. I used three different colors on the one barrel I painted this way, and didn't have much of any color left.

This list is based on one artist's experience. **Paint at your own risk! The Elkhart County SWCD does not take responsibility for the results of painting a rain barrel.**



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Rain Barrel Installation and Care



You have your rain barrel. Now what?

Look inside for tips on safely installing the barrel and keeping it in good repair.

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. You can also just leave the bottom spigot open.

Reconnect a downspout or temporary pipe to drain the water at least 10 feet from your house.

If you have a diverter valve, simply set the diverter to bypass the rain barrel.

