

Rain Barrel

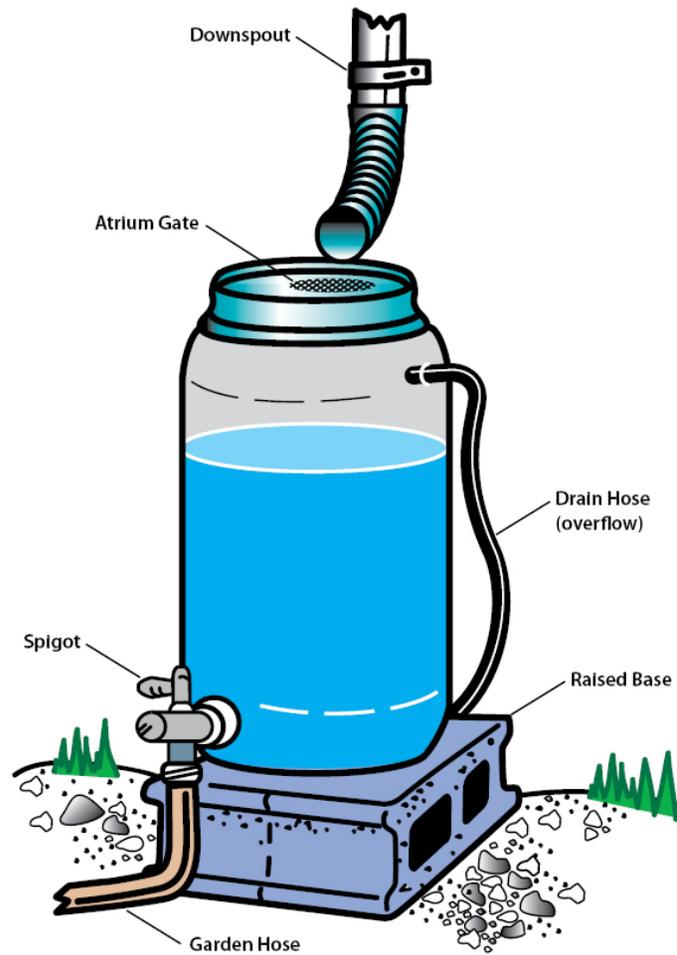


Image: Philadelphia Homeowner BMP Manual

A rain barrel is placed at a downspout and collects and stores stormwater runoff from rooftops. The collected rainwater can be reused for irrigation of planting areas (or potted plants) around your property. This type of BMP is called "Capture and Reuse." It is important that the water is emptied (i.e., used) in between storms so that there is room in the barrel for the next storm.

A typical residential rain barrel design includes an opening in the sealed lid to accept downspout flow, an overflow pipe for when the barrel is full, and a spigot at or near the bottom to attach a hose or faucet. A screen at the opening controls mosquitoes and other insects.

Only roof water should be collected for reuse as it is relatively clean; do not reuse water from parking or pedestrian areas, surface water runoff, or bodies of standing water.



RainCube (tm)

Benefits



Benefits

Rain barrels help lower potable water costs (reuse of "free" stormwater to irrigate your landscaping)

Rain barrels help reduce stormwater runoff (stormwater captured is no longer a lost resource that runs off the land surface into the nearest stream)

Costs



Cost Considerations

Rain Barrels are relatively inexpensive, ranging from \$80 to \$200 through online vendors (See Additional Resources for links to resellers of rain barrels). In general, the reuse of water for irrigation or other uses saves money on water costs over time.

East of Development/Construction

Rain barrels can be purchased online or built by a homeowner (Tredyffrin Township's EAC created a How-to guide, included under Additional Resources). The following points are important for homeowners to understand when choosing to use a rain barrel on their property:



- Locate rain barrels on a flat surface next to or near roof downspouts.
- Several rain barrels can be connected to store more rainwater (see image below)
- In areas with soils that drain well, you can direct overflow from the rain barrels onto the yard or landscape areas.
- The rain barrel should be emptied and disconnected during winter.
- Covers (lids) should have a tight fit to keep out surface water, animals, dust and light.
- An overflow should be provided a few inches from the top of the cistern.

Urban Rain Barrel (tm)

Aesthetics



Aesthetics

Rain barrels come in a variety of forms, some of which are aesthetically pleasing. Rain barrels are difficult to disguise and therefore should be purchased or constructed according to the homeowner's preference. See the Additional Resources section of this disc for websites which sell rain barrels.

Township Review

There should be no need for special Township review or permits when Rain Barrels are used on a property.

Maintenance



Site Constraints

Rain Barrels are best located close to a rooftop downspout and on a level surface.

Maintenance

- Inspect periodically for leaks, especially spigots and other connection points.
- Make sure debris does not clog the system.
- Screen all vents to prevent mosquito breeding.
- For maximum stormwater benefits, empty the barrel between rain events in the wet season.
- Clean the rain barrel interior annually by brushing or disinfecting with vinegar or other non-toxic cleaners. The washout can be disposed of onsite to vegetated areas if disinfecting agents are adequately diluted so they do not harm plants.
- A rain barrel and its system components have a lifespan of about 20 years.



White Oak Rain Barrel



Image:



Oasis Rain Collection System (tm)