

QUESTIONS?

Have a question about rain barrels or horticulture?

Contact the Newport News Master Gardeners



helpdesknnmga@gmail.com



nnmastergardeners.org



757-591-4838 Ext. 311

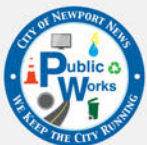


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Installing and Maintaining Your RAIN BARREL

Why harvest rain water?

Rainwater can be used to irrigate plants, home landscapes & bird baths, manage stormwater runoff, and reduce flooding and erosion around buildings.

Learn more tips and tricks to keep your rain barrel and home landscape healthy.

FIND MORE RESOURCES ONLINE:
nnmastergardeners.org

How much water will my rain barrel collect?

A general rule is that each inch of rain per square foot of roof can capture over half a gallon of water. For example, a 1,000 square foot roof can yield over 600 gallons from a one-inch rain event.

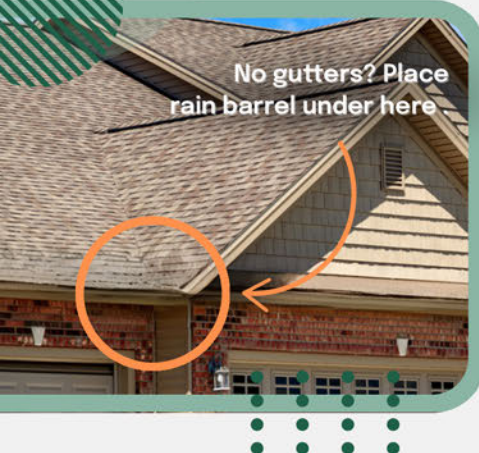


Photo appears courtesy of Clemson Cooperative Extension.

INSTALLATION TIPS

- Choose a flat area for your barrel, ensuring it's level.
- Consider if you need to connect a soaker hose or garden hose. Gravity affects water pressure, so you might need a small pump.
- Elevate the barrel (at least 1 foot) for proper water pressure. Ensure the base can support 450+ lbs.
- If connecting multiple barrels, ensure enough space and that the last barrel has an overflow hole. Use a hose to divert water away from your foundation.
- For roofs without gutters, place the barrel directly under an area that sheds water.



AT THE START OF EACH SEASON

Quickly inspect your rain barrel system to ensure it's working properly:

- Check that intakes and overflows are clear and not blocked.
- Remove any leaves or debris from the intake screen.
- Inspect the seals on the spigot and overflow fittings. If leaking, use waterproof silicone sealant to reseal them.

AT LEAST ONCE A YEAR

Clear debris from gutters:

- Clean gutters of leaves and debris at least once a year, or more often if you have nearby trees.
- Ensure water flows toward downspouts by fixing low or sagging spots.

Trim or remove overhanging plants to prevent leaves and debris from clogging gutters.

Winterize barrels if freezing is forecasted:

- Drain rain barrels and block the intake screen to prevent water buildup during the freeze. Consider moving the barrel during cold months.

Rinse your barrel at the end of the rainy season:

- Unscrew the intake screen, rinse with a hose, then drain or vacuum the barrel clean. For odors or algae, consult a pond or garden center for safe additives.

SAFETY TIPS

- **Do not drink water** collected in a rain barrel.
- Avoid using water on edible plants if your roof is chemically treated. Test the water for harmful chemicals if needed.
- If water sits for 7 days or the screen doesn't block all mosquito larvae, add a mosquito dunk with *Bacillus thuringiensis* (Bt) monthly. It kills larvae for 30 days and is safe for people, plants, & wildlife.