

Calgary



YardSmart Rain barrels

Conserving water and maintaining a beautiful yard go hand-in-hand.
Join over 33,000 Calgarians who already use rain barrels.



Created in partnership with



The cost of watering your yard can account for 30 per cent of your annual water bill. Using a rain barrel helps you conserve water and save money, all while keeping your plants healthy with soft, non-chlorinated rain water.

How do I choose a rain barrel?

Look for a sealed barrel equipped with:

- An overflow mechanism, such as a diverter, for use with your existing downspout
- An additional outlet and hose to redirect water to plants or trees from the barrel once it's full
- A drain or tap near the bottom to fill a watering can

You can use one barrel or set up a network of multiple barrels to increase your savings.

Setting up your rain barrel

Locate the downspout most convenient for barrel placement. If your rain barrel didn't come with its own stand, set it on some concrete blocks or flagstones for extra stability.

Direct, no diverter

If overflow onto the surrounding area won't lead to pooling around your foundation, cut your downspout to the right length so the open end can be redirected into the top of the open barrel. You can also add a second outlet near the top of the barrel and attach a hose to direct overflow water to a tree or garden.

Using a diverter

If a rain barrel that overflows onto the surrounding area could lead to problems, install a downspout diverter. This leads rainwater into your barrel until it fills, at which point extra water is directed back into the downspout, preventing any potential problems with overflowing. Downspout diverter kits can be purchased through Green Calgary or at hardware and garden stores in Calgary.

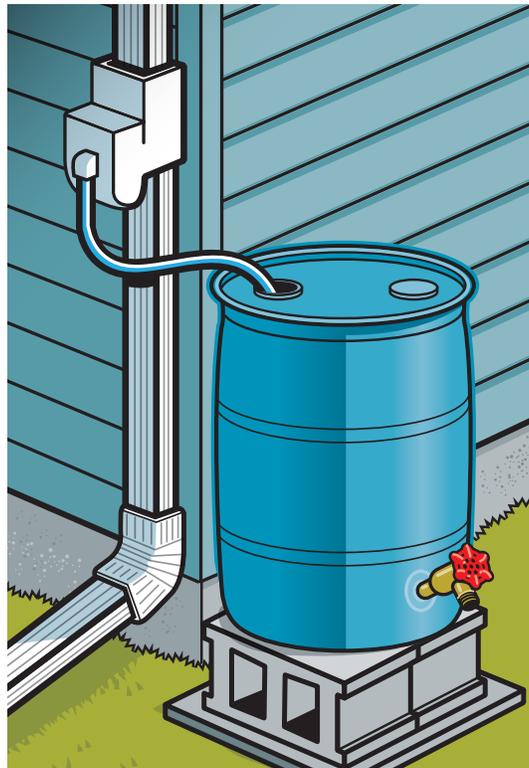
Read the installation instructions that come with your rain barrel carefully, and refer to the barrel manufacturer or retailer for support.

Setting up more than one rain barrel

You can capture even more rainwater if you use multiple rain barrels. Place one rain barrel at the base of each of your downspouts, or connect several rain barrels in a series that fill from the same downspout. Contact your local supplier or GreenCalgary for more information.



Rain barrel without a diverter.



Rain barrel with a diverter.



Multiple rain barrel set-up.

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Calgary receives an average rainfall of five centimetres or 4,000 litres of water per month during the summer. That can fill a typical 45-gallon rain barrel 20 times.

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Maximize your water savings.

Once you've set up your barrel make sure to use rainwater regularly to maximize your water savings. Emptying your barrels regularly ensures they have the capacity to refill with the next rainfall, providing you with a steady supply.



Seasonal maintenance checklist

Spring and summer

Rain barrels are virtually maintenance-free during the spring and summer months. Here are some things you can do to keep your rain barrel in good working condition:

- If your downspout enters the barrel directly put a fine mesh cover over the entry hole.
- Keep the barrel free of organic material and rinse as needed to remove any algae growth.

Fall and winter

A few quick actions when cold weather arrives will keep your barrel from cracking:

- Completely drain your barrel of water.
- Remove and store taps and place barrel in an area where it will be protected from the weather.
- Always remember to remove your diverter and reconnect your downspout.

Remember - collected rainwater is not potable, which means you shouldn't drink it, nor use it on vegetable gardens.

Buy a rain barrel

Green Calgary (#100, 301 14th St. N.W., Calgary, Alberta T2N 2A1) sells food grade barrels retrofitted for rain barrel use. Call 403-230-1443 or visit greencalgary.org.

Please visit calgary.ca for more information on conserving water and gardening in Calgary.

