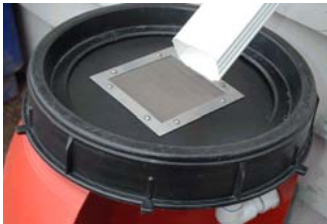


## **Installing Your Rain Barrel**

- Select a site for your barrel on level ground in front of a downspout close to the gardens you want to water.
- We recommend you set the barrels on (2) 3" thick pavers or (2) 6" thick cinder blocks to provide stability and easier access to the lower spigot. (If you do this, make sure the ground is solid and the pavers/blocks level.) If connecting a series of barrels, use cinder blocks to allow for the additional height required for a Y connector.
- Cut the downspout using a hacksaw, eight to twelve inches above the barrel.
- Remove the lower section of downspout and install the 1 1/2" diameter overflow hose to the 1 1/2" barbed fitting. (Your system comes with 2 1/2 feet of drain hose.) Your drain hose has been sized on one end for easy installation. You may still need to use soapy water to slide hose onto the barbed fitting. If you are setting your barrel higher than 6" off the ground you can obtain a longer drain hose from AtWork! for a small fee.
- Slide the barrel into its permanent location.
- Insert the overflow hose into the downspout drain. (You may need to cut the hose to prevent kinking.)
- Attach a downspout elbow and short downspout section to the remaining downspout to direct water onto the screened lid of your barrel. (You may have an elbow if your downspout was directed onto a splash block. If not, you'll need to purchase one from a hardware store.)



Note: Our barrels have a **larger 1 1/2" diameter overflow** that should handle most northwest rain conditions. You may still want to invest in a downspout adapter that would enable you to direct water flow to the top of the barrel when you need it, but switch back to the downspout carrying water to your drainage system during winter's heavy rain months.

## **Using Water From Your Rain Barrel System**

- Your rain barrel has (2) spigots (sometimes called hose bibs).
- One is attached 12-14 inches from the bottom and designed to a height that makes it easy to fill your watering can for direct watering of small plantings.
- The second spigot located at the bottom of the barrel is used as a drain. You can also attach a soaker hose to this spigot for watering nearby plantings or use it to connect a series of rain barrels.

## **Connecting Barrels Together**

- Before connecting barrels in series you must have at least one downspout water collecting barrel with overflow hose connected to downspout drain. Additional connecting series barrels do not have overflow drains. They have one drain spigot and a screened vent in the barrel lid for proper water flow and drainage.
- You can connect barrels together using a short length of hose, a hose Y connector and two female garden hose fittings for each additional barrel. (These accessories can be purchased from a hardware store.)
- Attach the fittings to each end of the short length of hose.
- Attach the Y connector to the drain spigot on one barrel.
- Fasten one end of the hose you made to the Y connector and the other end to the drain spigot on your series connecting barrel.
- You can connect as many barrels as you want this way, enabling you to draw water from all of them using the same spigot. (You can then locate your additional barrels in more camouflaged or hard to reach places.)
- To guarantee you can make use of all the water in your system when connecting barrels in a series, make sure all barrels are in the same plane and level.



## Maintaining Your Rain Barrel

- Clean leaves and other materials off the top to keep the screen from clogging.
- Make sure your overflow is not clogged.
- Although it may not be necessary with the large 1 ½" overflow of our model, you may want to reconnect your downspouts to send the heaviest flows back into your drainage system.
- We don't recommend painting your rain barrel. Most paints are likely to chip off when they expand and contract with changing weather conditions.

**Note: Do not use the water from your rain barrel for drinking, washing or cooking. IT IS NOT POTABLE! Your rain barrel lid is screened to keep out mosquitoes, but fecal coliform bacteria from bird droppings and other harmful microbes are likely present**

## When NOT to Use a Rain Barrel

- If your roof is made of wood shingles or shakes and has been treated with chemicals to resist rotting and moss growth don't use a rain barrel.
- If you have zinc (galvanized metal) anti moss strips at your roof peaks don't use rain barrels.
- If you have a copper roof or gutters don't use rain barrels.
- If you have asphalt shingles with zinc embedded in the surface don't use rain barrels.
- If you've recently re-roofed, check your shingle specifications before using rain barrels.

**Note: Although it is common practice to water ornamental plants and shrubs with water from asphalt shingle roofs and flat tar roofs, most people avoid using it on plants for human consumption.**

## AtWork! Rain Barrels



Cross section view

Watering from your rain barrel and using other water saving techniques will have a positive impact on our beautiful northwest environment.

***AtWork! is an entrepreneurial non-profit that provides jobs and training for people with disabilities.***

**Rainbarrels can be ordered from:**

**Snohomish Conservation District**

**[rainbarrels@snohomishcd.org](mailto:rainbarrels@snohomishcd.org)**

**425-335-5634, ext 4**