

Rain Barrel Tips & FAQs



- **DO NOT DRINK water from your rain barrel!** The water is non-potable, and may contain animal droppings, dust, roof composite, or other pollutants.
- Locate your rain barrel on firm, level ground, at a higher location than the area you intend to water. You can place the barrel on a concrete paving stone, bricks, or cinder blocks.
- Do not place the barrel where it may allow an intruder to gain access to your home, such as under a window or balcony.
- **Is any maintenance required?** The screened lid on your rain barrel is designed to keep debris from entering the barrel. Monitor your rain barrel, keep the screen clear of debris, and clean on an as-needed basis.
- **How do I clean the barrel?** Rinse your barrel occasionally to remove small amounts of fine debris and organic material. If there are large pieces of material in the barrel, remove the hose assembly prior to rinsing (this is a good time to thoroughly clean the assembly). A safe cleaning solution is 2 teaspoons of castile soap and 2 teaspoons of vinegar per gallon of water, or 2 teaspoons of lemon juice per gallon of water in the barrel. Empty the water into your landscaping - the diluted cleaning product should not harm your plants or lawn. If the water is used frequently, cleaning is rarely necessary.
- **How long can water be stored?** Some sources recommend no more than seven days, while others say it can be stored indefinitely. If you use it frequently, you'll have more storage room available for the next rain.
- **Are mosquitoes an issue?** Possibly, although your rain barrel's screened lid is designed to keep mosquitoes out. As a precaution, use the water from your barrel often. Non-toxic products such as "Mosquito Bits" can be added to the water to kill mosquito larvae.
- **What about algae?** Plants don't mind algae, but it could clog the spigot. When cleaning your barrel, remove and clean the hose assembly as well.
- **Is it safe to use water from my rain barrel on a vegetable garden?** Asphalt-shingle roofs and flat tar roofs may leach complex hydrocarbon compounds that should not be used on plants meant for human consumption. Depending upon the makeup of your roof, and whether your gutters and downspouts contain lead paint, water from your rain barrel may not be suitable for vegetables. If you do use the water on a vegetable garden, it is best to use this water for drip irrigation, and avoid using overhead irrigation.

Visit the Websites Below for Additional Rain Barrel Accessories, Information, and Vendors

www.sbwater.org

www.system.com

www.raintainer.com

www.watersavers.com

www.rainsaverusa.com

www.rainbarrelmanual.com

www.bayteccontainers.com

www.rainwatersolutions.com

www.sprucecreekrainsaver.com

www.bluerivermn.com

www.aquabarrel.com

www.montgomerycountymd.gov/content/dep/rainscapes/barrels.htm
www.gardeners.com/downspout+diverter/33-991,default,pd.html

***The City and County of Santa Barbara thank you
for helping to conserve water resources,
reduce runoff, and prevent creek and
ocean water pollution!***

**County of Santa Barbara
Water Resources Division**

(805) 568-3440

www.countyofsb.org/pwd/pwwater.aspx

**City of Santa Barbara
Creeks Division**

(805) 897-2658

www.sbcreeks.com

