

LTBB RAIN BARREL WORKSHOP

At the rain barrel workshop, we presented on the benefits of having a rain barrel and some basic maintenance tips. Below you find information on how to finish setting up your barrel.

Use the water for your garden, to wash your dog/car/dirty feet, to fill a bird bath, etc.

Do not drink it or cook with it!

Prepare the Location

1. Choose a downspout, preferably one that drains to concrete and is near plants to water. Hose allows for 3 feet of distance.
2. Place on level ground. Use wood, pavers, or stones to make a level spot if needed.
3. Elevate to increase gravity feed. Use wood, pavers, or stones to make that elevation. Follow the instructions in your kit for the rest of the set up.

No gutters? No problem!

If you don't have gutters, use a rain chain or a rain saucer/funnel to direct rain flow into your barrel. You can buy these or make your own!

-Hang the rain chain from a point on your roof where you notice the water converging to pour off. Install it to hang directly over one of the screw openings in the lid. Secure a screen over the screw opening to prevent mosquitoes from getting in the barrel.

A few additional tips:

- One thing that is not included in the supply list is silicone sealant. You will probably want to use this for sealing the spigot and the hose when inserted into the barrel.
- Try to drill the spigot hole as close to the bottom of the barrel as possible. The lower the better since that will enable you to access more water from the barrel.
- Try to drill the hole for the inflow hose as close to the top of the barrel as possible. The higher the better since that will enable you to fill the barrel with more water.
- Place the barrel on the stand before measuring where to drill into your gutter for the diverter.
- Drill into the wide side of the gutter for diverter placement.
- Angle the hose very slightly down from gutter to barrel.

Rain Barrel Care

- Keep gutters clear of debris.
- Clean periodically, and rinse barrel with bleach/water solution.

- After the first flush following a prolonged dry period, don't use the water for any purposes other than watering plants. The rain will wash lots of dust, dirt, and gunk from your roof. You don't want to wash your feet, dog, car, etc. with that but it's fine for your plants.
- For winter storage, be sure to empty your barrel of all water. Leave the spigot open and store upside down.

Algae Prevention

As mentioned in the workshop, it's important to make sure your barrel is protected from the sun, either by painting or covering it. The barrels are translucent and when the sunlight shines through when they're unpainted, algae will grow in them. So, either make sure you're cleaning your barrel regularly and using the water before the algae can grow, or alter it so that it's not translucent. As long as you find some way to keep the barrel covered, that's fine. Some creative solutions:

- A barrel skirt made of weatherproof fabric.
- Wooden container, built around the barrel.
- A big plastic tarp, tied over and across the barrel.
- A barrel wrapped in bamboo/straw fence roll.

*Make sure that you are keep any bits of leaves or twigs out of your barrel as this will promote algae growth

There are many ways to make it work! Should you get algae in your barrel, here is what you can do:

-add 1 tablespoon of bleach to a full barrel (55 gallons) and wait 24 hours to allow the chlorine to dissipate before applying to your plants.

Mosquito Prevention

- Make sure you use the water regularly.
- Place 'mosquito dunks' in the barrel once a month or as needed.
- Use ¼ cup of vegetable oil once a week or after each storm.
- Use 1 TBSP of dish soap once a week or after each storm.