

# Instructions for Making a Rain Barrel



Provided by



# Step 1

## Clean Barrels

### Tools and Materials:

1. 55 Gallon Food Grade Plastic Barrel
2. Water
3. Soap
4. Vinegar or lemon juice
5. Rag

- Use Food Grade 55 gallon plastic barrel
- Empty barrel of contents.
- Give one quick rinse
- Cleaning solution: 2 teaspoons of soap and 2 teaspoons of vinegar or lemon juice to every gallon of water used.
- Clean barrel by rolling barrel vigorously
- (Barrels containing oily foods such as sauces with oil will need to be wiped down with a cloth.)
- Rinse and slosh until soap suds are gone.
- Empty remaining water.
- Let dry.
- Proceed to Step 2

# Step 2

## Cutting Top Hole

(use step 2 instructions when using a fixed lid barrel, if you have a barrel with a removable lid skip this step and move on to step 3)

### Tools and Materials:

1. Jigsaw with plastic grade blade
  2. Drill with 15/16 spade bit
  3. Marker
  4. Safety goggles
  5. Metal File or Steel wool
- Draw a line across the top of barrel to mark where to cut semi-circle.
  - PUT ON SAFETY GOGGLES
  - Drill a starter hole along the line marked for cutting using the 15/16 spade drill bit. (This serves two functions to practice using the spade drill bit and create a starter hole. Drill another practice hole in the part of the lid you will cut off. You will use this hole to practice using the pipe tap later.)
  - Use starter hole to begin cutting hole with jigsaw. Be sure to keep jigsaw level, especially along the edges of the barrel where the plastic is thickest. Keep one foot pedal on the rim of the barrel when cutting along the edge of the barrel. You will cut about an inch from rim of barrel to keep out of thick plastic and to cut between rim and existing pour hole.
  - Hold jigsaw firmly, but do not push through cutting too hard. (It helps to have someone hold the barrel steady for you.)
  - Take a file or steel wool to edge of cut to smooth.
  - Check if your barrel needs additional cleaning now that you have a large hole to look into. If additional cleaning is necessary see step 1 again.
  - Proceed to Step 3

# Step 3

## Making Faucet Hole

### Tools & Materials:

1. Drill with 15/16 drill bit
2. Safety Goggles
3. Marker
4.  $\frac{3}{4}$  in Pipe Tap
5. Crescent wrench

- Determine where you want the faucet to be placed. This depends on where you will locate the barrel. The large hole cut in the top will be closest to the down spout. So, usually placing the faucet hole perpendicular to the large top hole works best. The hole should be two to three inches from the bottom of the barrel.
- Mark this spot with the marker. Keep track of which barrel goes where if you are making more than one.
- **PUT ON SAFETY GOGGLES.**
- Drill a starter hole with a small drill bit.
- Then drill the faucet hole using the 15/16 spade drill bit.
- Take  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch pipe tap and place a crescent wrench on top to act as a handle. Turn clockwise into hole to thread the hole. Keep turning until pipe tap is about 1 inch through the hole. Turn counterclockwise to remove the pipe tap from the whole. (You can practice this on the practice hole you cut in the discarded piece you cut out of the top of the barrel.)
- Proceed to Step 4

# Step 4

## Making Overflow Hole

### Tools and Materials:

1. Drill with 1 1/4 inch hole saw drill bit
2. Safety Goggles

- Mark where you want to locate the overflow hole in relation to where the hose will drain. Usually about 3 inches from the top. Placement is often in line with the line cut across the top of the barrel often works well. (Which would make it at 90 degrees from faucet opening.) If using 1 1/4 in bit, you will need to file the hole to a larger size to fit barb fitting. Be careful to regularly check to see if the hole is ready as you are filing, you do not want to make the hole too big. (Filing will be done at step 5.)
- PUT ON SAFETY GOGGLES.
- Center drill bit on the mark and cut hole. Use enough pressure on drill to cut but not too much that it stops the movement of the drill bit.
- Proceed to Step 5.

# Step 5

## Overflow Assembly Part A & B

### Tools and Materials:

1. Metal curved File
2. Shop Vac
3. 1 1/4 inch Barb fitting
4. 1 1/4 inch adapter
5. 1 1/4 inch sump pump hose.
6. Clamp that opens to 2 inches
7. Flat head screw driver

### Part A

- File the hole using a metal file until it is just large enough to screw the barb fitting into the hole. Regularly check to see if the hole is ready as you are filing, you do not want to make the hole too big.
- Screw the threaded end of the barb fitting through the hole.
- Shop vac the inside of the barrel to clean out plastic shavings.
- (If you want to paint your barrel this is a good time to do it. Use 2-3 cans of Fusion spray paint for plastic. Follow paint can directions.)
- Proceed to step 6 (Before securing the barb fitting on with the adapter.)

### Part B Upon Returning to step 5 after completing step 6

- Screw adapter on tightly to the threaded part of the barb fitting.
- Attach drain hose to barb fitting.
- Place clamp around the drain hose on the barb fitting and tighten.
- Proceed to Step 7

# Step 6

## Faucet Assembly

### Tools and Materials:

1.  $\frac{3}{4}$  in Male Faucet assembly (boiler drain style)
  2. Gasket Material
  3. 1 inch washer
  4. Silicone and caulk gun
- Using the tapped hole at the bottom of the barrel, place the faucet in the hole. Turn the faucet counterclockwise to drop the faucet into the threads then turn clockwise to screw the faucet all the way into the hole. You may need a wrench to give you the leverage to screw the faucet all the way in the hole.
  - Use the inner hole of a 1 inch washer to trace a circle onto the gasket material.
  - Cut out the hole in the gasket material.
  - Reach inside the barrel to place the gasket around the faucet threads.
  - Place the washer on next.
  - Screw on the adapter next to secure the faucet in place. Have someone hold the faucet on the outside so that it stays in place and does not turn as you tighten the adapter.
  - Seal the outside of the faucet with silicone.
  - Return to Step 4 to complete Overflow Assembly.

# Step 7

## Screening the Barrel

### Tools and Materials:

1. 28 x 28 inch fiberglass screen
  2. Twine
- Place the screen over the barrel top.
  - Screw lid rim over screening.
  - Trim screen evenly around the lid.

Ta da your barrel is complete.



# Step 8

## Installing your Barrel

### Tools and Materials:

1. Hack Saw
  2. Gutter Elbow (I found that flexible elbows allow for easier installation)
  3. Pencil or marker
- Place barrel at down spout.
  - Stack cinderblocks under the barrel to make room for a bucket or watering can to fit under the faucet at the bottom of the barrel.
  - Determine the height at which you need to cut the down spout to allow room for the elbow to fit above the barrel. (Between six and eight inches above the barrel height depending on the elbow you use.)
  - Mark with a pencil or marker.
  - Cut down spout.
  - Attach Elbow to down spout.
  - Place barrel under downspout.
  - Direct overflow hose away from the foundation or into existing underground drains.

### Do a rain dance!

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#### General Maintenance

##### Cleaning:

- The barrel will need cleaning of residue buildup 1-2 times per year.
- Algae may build up, especially in the hot weather. Look at your local pet or home improvement store for bio-friendly products to clean out Algae. Alternately, a cup of bleach will help keep the algae in check and will be deluded enough by the water so that it will not harm your plants.

##### Prevent breeding of mosquitoes:

- Keep your barrel covered with the screening and periodically inspect for holes in screening.
- You can put one tablespoon of olive or vegetable oil to make a slick surface that the mosquitoes will stay away from.
- Use a mosquito dunk (bio friendly) and place in barrel, replace when dissolved. You can find these at your local home improvement store.