



Clean Lakes Committee Town of Littleton

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Rain Barrel Installation Guide

Congratulations on your purchase of the Barrel Baron's rain barrel. You've joined many residents of Littleton who have invested in the future and well being of Littleton's water supply and helped restore our surface water bodies.

In a nutrient sensitive area, like Long Lake, stopping the first flush of storm water from getting to the lake is crucial. The first ¼ inch of rain in a rain storm contains the highest concentration of nutrients that can accelerate the growth of invasive aquatic vegetation in the lake. The continued growth of vegetation will eventually deplete the water of oxygen in the lake and slowly suffocate the various fish population in the lake. The long term effects of storm water run off can lead to the eventual filling of Long Lake.

As soon as your rain barrel is full, which can occur in one rain storm, it should be emptied during the next dry period. Use this nutrient rich water to water your gardens and lawns during dry spells, fill the birdbath, clean the mud from your shoes or quench the thirst of your compost pile. This is free water. Every gallon of water used from your new rain barrel is a gallon of tap water you won't be wasting. Along with saving money on your water bill you'll be saving the Town's most valuable resource (clean water).

Installation Suggestions

In almost every location a rain barrel can be installed, some modification to the down spout may be required. The rain barrel simply can be placed under your down spout, but including some of the following recommendations may prevent the barrel from tilting or becoming damaged through the course of its life.

Figure 1. shows the rain barrel components. The top filter screen is where the rain water enters the barrel. The overflow outlet is where the water exits the barrel when it is full. The output spigot is used to fill a watering can or to connect a garden hose.

The Clean Lakes Committee recommends that the barrel be raised with blocks. Raising the barrel allows the output spigot to be accessed more easily.

Leveling the Barrel

Because the weight of fifty gallons of can cause the barrel to tilt, it should be on solid level ground. After deciding on the placement of the rain barrel, dig out an area four to six inches deep large enough for the barrel's base. Pack the dirt in the bottom of the newly dug hole with your feet or a cinder block. Fill the hole with gravel. Smooth the gravel over to create a level surface. Now the rain barrel can be positioned or blocks can be placed to raise the barrel.

Connecting the Down Spout

Basically the down spout needs to be directed into the center of the top filter screen inlet of the rain barrel.

In the simplest case the rain barrel can be placed just below the downspout. In many cases the downspout will have to be modified to direct the water into the barrel. In many cases the downspout will have to be cut. An elbow may be required to extend the down spout over the center of the barrel. Your local hardware store will most likely carry a flexible extension for your downspout. The flexible extension allows you to bend and shape the water conduit, to feed directly into the center of the rain barrel and will eliminate the need to purchase brand name downspout parts.

Overflow Outlet and Cascading Barrels

The overflow connector should be connected to a hose. Run the hose to a location that will direct the overflow away from your dwelling's foundation. Or connect the overflow outlets to cascade the rain barrels.

Cleaning the Barrel

The rain barrel will collect small organic particles over the course of a season. It is recommended that the rain barrel be clean out in the spring and fall. Empty the rain barrel remove the top filter screen inlet and use some clean rain water to rinse the organic sludge from the barrel. During the summer months it is important to keep mosquitoes and other bugs out of your rain barrel. Keep the top filter screen inlet tight and use your free water often. There are organic pesticides made available expressly for rain barrels (check your local hardware store).

Winter Use

In New England the cold weather will freeze any water in your rain barrel. It is recommended that the spigot be left open during the winter months. Leaving the spigot open will permit the snow melt to run through the barrel system and will prevent ice from damaging the spigot.

Quick Start Installation

1. Prepare a level footing for rain barrel under the gutter down spout (1). Remove 4 – 6 inches of dirt and fill with gravel (2).
2. If you wish to raise the rain barrel, place blocks on the level footing (3).
3. Place the rain barrel under the down spout (1). The down spout may have to be cut or modified with an elbow (4) for the storm water to reach the rain barrel.
4. Connect the overflow outlet to a drain hose (5) or another rain barrel.
5. Check the inlet screen (6) regularly for accumulation of debris.
6. Remove the top of the rain barrel (7) to clean out debris, two (or more) times/year.

