

My Rain Bucket Book

<http://gravitygarden.com/rainbucket/>

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Water is the fundamental ingredient to all life as we know it. Without water, our world would be a much different place.

In some parts of the world, rain is plentiful with food crops growing without issue or worry. Humans will always take natural resources for granted until the day comes where it becomes apparent that these resources will no longer sustain life.

Each person can do their part in conserving water and looking for alternative ways to be smarter in their use of natural resources. Rain Buckets or Barrels are one small way you can do your part .

My Rain Bucket/Barrel Book

A Running compilation of my
Rain Harvesting Strategy

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What is a Rain Harvesting?

Harvesting rainwater from the sky is not a new concept. Man has been collecting rain for thousands of years so that life giving water can be used to keep crops alive when water is scarce.

The 3 basic areas of a rain harvesting system are: Collection, Storage and Distribution. Rain buckets are the large containers that can be designed specifically for the purpose of collecting water and can be as simple as vinyl or plastic trash cans, or as elaborate as large collection tanks.

When located near downspouts, these [large rain buckets](#) can collect rainwater from the roof and that is naturally distributed by gravity to the gutters and downspouts. Since the roof has the largest surface area, it is an obvious choice to harvest the rain from this source.

Water used in these containers are not potable (meant for drinking or bathing), but can be a free source of water collected from rainstorms to feed your [garden](#) when rainfall is sparse. Since rainwater is free, it is a means to provide refreshment to your plants and [vegetables](#) without having to pay the local authority.

Many beginning gardeners are starting [bucket or container gardens](#) and other [Organic gardens](#) to grow their [vegetables](#). These backyard spaces will need to be given liquid refreshment from time to time.

Since aspiring gardeners have very nice gardens in the springtime as rainstorms are common. The need for water will increase as the summer months begin to creep in and your crops are beginning to bake under the hot sun. Having a sustainable rain harvesting system to collect, store and distribute water will become much more important to keep them alive.

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Rain Buckets – A Key Strategy for your Veggie Garden

“April Showers bring May Flowers...” is the old adage that describes the spring months across many parts of the country where rain is plentiful. During April and May, it is hard to imagine not being able to provide life giving water to your vegetable garden. When the tomato and bean plants need a sprinkle, turning on the hose is easily done and never given a second thought.

But, once the dog days of summer hit, and the weekly rain showers do not make their way to your new crops, they might begin to look a little worn as they begin to dry out and become parched in the hot sun. Water becomes more important and your responsibility to keep them from dying is more apparent.

Large **rain buckets** or rain-barrels are easily setup to collect life giving rain water during those times when storms pass through. Harvesting rain is something that every person should be thinking of as they begin their quest to add gardens to their backyards.

Usually the basic question on many minds is “How do I get started and how hard is it to do?” Having a strategy and plan are crucial in creating a sustainable collection, storage and distribution system for your home. These systems can be very elaborate and expensive, but in most cases, keeping it simple is preferable as funds are usually limited.

The 3 basic areas of a rain harvesting system are: Collection, Storage and Distribution. Rain buckets are the large containers that can be designed specifically for the purpose of collecting the rain and can be as simple as vinyl or plastic trash cans. When located near downspouts, these rain buckets can collect water that land on the roof. Since the roof has the largest surface area, it is common practice to place your rain bucket near the house or shed where the downspouts channel the water from the house.

Once you know where you want to locate the rain bucket, the next question often asked is “[How do I get the rain into the bucket?](#)” Typically, this is done by cutting off part of the down spout so that the end sits a bit higher than the bucket itself. Cut a hole in the lid and cover the opening with a very

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thin wire mesh. This mesh will allow the rainwater to enter, but prevent insects such as mosquitoes from nesting in the water.

Cut an 8-10 inch piece of the 1" PVC pipe. Apply PVC Cement liberally around one end and the female to male hose bib adapter. Twist slightly and let set for about 10 minutes. While this is setting, take your electric drill with a 1" spade bit and drill a hole about 3 inches from the bottom of the bucket. Insert the 1" by 8" PVC pipe with a hose thread exposed. Seal the hole with PVC cement and let set for about 10 minutes to prevent leakage. Once set, you'll be able to hook up a standard garden hose to the exposed PVC Pipe. The pressure from the amount of water contained inside the rain bucket will allow you to water your plants without much difficulty.

In summary, a large [Rain Bucket](#) is an easy way to begin conserving water to provide your garden with essential life giving fluid whenever needed. Since the water had been collected and stored from the previous rainstorms, you will not have to worry about the bill.

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The Mosquito, One outdoor Pest that would love to Move into your Rain Barrel



The adult mosquito is capable of flying long distances in search of food. The female will look to feed on warm blooded animals and once engorged with blood, she will search for a place to lay her eggs. These eggs will need to be located in a place suitable for sustaining the thousands of young

larvae to hatch and grow. Guess which container housing many gallons of rain water they would love to nest in... your [Rain Barrel!](#)

Outdoor garden barrels are perfect habitats for the pesky little creatures known as the **mosquito, outdoor** pest. The annoying insect that feeds on your blood at dusk leaving a nice welt that can itch for days. Not only can it be an annoying insect, it can also carry a dangerous disease called the West Nile Virus. The West Nile virus is a nasty disease that can lead to fever, headaches, fatigue, body aches and an occasional skin rash on the main areas of the body.

Preventing mosquitoes from entering your [rain catcher](#) is easy if you have purchased a self contained one from a local retailer. However, if you have made your own from a trash can or steel drum, you may be inviting disaster, if you have not taken the appropriate measures in your design.

If you have just cut a large hole for the downspout or left the lid off for the water to enter, you have provided a perfect habitat for outdoor mosquito to lay their millions of eggs. These eggs could hatch and continue infesting the area with millions of mosquitoes.

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If you have indeed created your own [rain barrel](#) for harvesting rainwater, it is important to take the necessary measures in ensuring you have sealed the areas appropriately, to prevent any pests from entering and laying their eggs.

An enclosed unit is preferred, and will be best suited to keep the pests from entering the container. There are [downspout diverter kits](#) you can purchase that will allow water to enter the barrel and keep everything self contained and sealed.

If you have designed an open ended [rain barrel system](#), it would be prudent to cover the opening with a screen mesh or attach a lid with the opening covered with the screening material. This will allow the water to enter but prevent the female mosquito from being able to infest the water supply and lay her eggs.

In conclusion, your rain barrel is a great way to store water for your garden and plants, but keeping the *outdoor mosquito* from camping out and breeding inside will prevent longer term issues down the road. An ounce of prevention is definitely better than having to deal with the alternative.

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Make a PVC Water distribution system from your Rain Barrel to your Garden in 3 Easy Steps

Placing a [Rain Barrel](#) underneath a downspout is the method most people will use to collect and store the water coming from the rooftop, but how do you get the water to your garden? Certainly, a garden hose can be connected to your rain bucket and used to distribute water to your vegetables.

However, a garden hose can be a hassle as it can constantly tangle and get caught up in other brush and yard obstacles. And when you are done with the hose it needs to be wrapped up and put away after each use.

A PVC water distribution system can be an easy alternative to the garden hose method in getting water to your new garden. Channeling the water through PVC is a much more permanent solution and provides a fixed and stationary way for getting water where you need it the most. Since PVC can sit above or below ground, you can decide the best approach based on your preferences.

Step 1 Plan your Route – Planning your PVC water route is not as overwhelming as it may seem. All that needs to be done in this is to establish the best, most efficient route from point A, your rain barrel to Point B your vegetable garden. As your old Math Teacher used to say “The shortest path between two points is a straight line.” Try to define the straightest line between points A and B if possible. This will minimize the amount of elbows and tees needed to put your PVC water system together.

Step 2 –Once you have defined the best path, map out and measure the route you want your PVC delivery system to take. Purchase the materials at your local garden or home improvement store. Be mindful to purchase a few extra tees and elbows as sometimes your tubing may need to be re-routed a different way due to some of the obstacles in your yard.

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Step 3 – Begin to erect your delivery system by placing the PVC tubing, tees and elbows together. Once it is all in place use, hook up a garden hose to the beginning to test it out. Since the pressure from your rain barrel will not be high, it is recommended to keep the hose pressure fairly low. If you have reached the desired result, go back through and glue each piece together with PVC cement. Connect the beginning to your rain barrel spigot and test the system from beginning to end.

In summary, a *PVC water* delivery system can be a fairly simple task to design and put together. Once in place, your rain barrel will become the main water source and feed your garden with the liquid refreshment it will need on hot dry evenings.

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Is a Hard Yard Plastic Outdoor Garden Barrel the best Choice?

What is the most important factor for your [Rain Catcher](#)? When designing your new rain harvesting system, you may have several goals in mind. Of course, the basic desire is to collect rainwater from the rooftop and use to watering your plants in your bucket garden or other areas of the lawn. However, if you are trying to accomplish this within a certain budget, you may have to weigh other factors to drive your decision process.

The more common materials include; hard **yard plastic**, stainless steel and wood from recycled [whiskey barrels](#). Any of these materials can be used for the purpose of housing rainwater for your garden needs. All of these materials are capable of withstanding the elements and depending upon price, availability, weight and visual aesthetics, determining the best material for your rain barrel can be a challenge.

Depending on the type of product you choose, you can find many different [shapes, sizes and colors for outdoor garden barrels](#). With so many styles and colors to choose from, the chances of finding one in hard yard plastic to match your exterior home and landscape are fairly high.

The cost of these containers can run into the hundreds of dollars but may be well worth it if you find one that matches your space. This may or may not be an issue, but it important to know that you can create the same capability with a lot less money if this is a concern. If you are not as concerned with looks or if funds are limited, it may be more suitable to look for a recycled stainless steel container or 55 gallon steel drum. Unfortunately, using a recycled steel drum may be more of a hassle than it's worth due to the weight and previous use.

Keep in mind that the purpose of collecting and storing rain is to water your plants and [tomatoes](#) and other [vegetables](#), not for drinking or bathing. Rainwater coming from the rooftop is contaminated with bird droppings, mold and other foreign material that would not be suitable without extensive water treatment.

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Another available option is to go to your favorite home improvement store and purchase a basic rubber like or vinyl trash can. Spending \$10.00-\$20.00 may still be within your budget, and suitable for your [backyard garden](#).

If a more traditional approach is what you are looking for, a recycled whiskey barrel that has been cleaned out can serve as a nice ornamental piece as well as be a fully functional [rain barrel](#).

In summary, your choices for designing a rainwater storage unit as part of your water harvesting strategy can be made from hard *yard plastic*, stainless steel, wood or even a simple vinyl trash can. No matter what design or material you put in your system, you are doing your part in helping conserve water for a better planet.

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Outdoor Garden Barrels Make Great Rain Catchers

Water, sun and soil... the 3 main components your garden needs to sustain life in the form of food. If one is removed from the equation, your food source would disappear. Water is the only one of these three elements that can be difficult to find in certain climates. As water become scarce in some areas, it is becoming more apparent that it should not be taken for granted.

Providing life giving water to your garden can be as easy as turning on the hose and sprinkling your vegetable garden. In some areas, this is not the case and many are turning to ways to harvest the rain. **Outdoor [garden barrels](#)** can be easily acquired and strategically positioned to become holding tanks for water during rainstorms. These rain catchers can keep rainwater stored until ready for use in your [garden](#).

As the new wave of urban and suburban gardeners become more accustomed in growing their own food, access to water through the normal hose and spigot will add to the cost of maintenance of their food source. In times of drought and water rationing, those that plan ahead and design a water harvesting system, can continue to provide life sustaining liquid to their plantings.

A rain harvesting system can be fairly simple to make or more sophisticated if you desire. In either case, it makes good sense to begin to plan for ways to hold onto rain water in times when it is plentiful for use when it is scarce. There are three main parts to the rain collection system; collection, storage and distribution.

Positioning your [rain catcher](#) to collect the most amount of rain water is essential to maximize the amount of water you can store in any given period. It may not be apparent in times of heavy rains, but when only a few showers sprinkle your area every several days, an efficient collection system will be more important.

The obvious choice is to utilize your home as the main source of collecting water during rainstorms. Due to the surface area of your rooftop, your home will accumulate much of the water and because of the pitch of the roof it will naturally channel the water away from the home utilizing gutters and

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downspouts. Locating your outdoor barrel to collect the water is the most obvious choice. If your garden is near your home, it is a natural choice to locate the outdoor barrel nearby.

Water storage is the next part of the design of your water harvesting system. This can be as simple as using a plastic or rubber container such as a trashcan or 55 gallon drum or a more visually pleasing design from the garden store. As long as the unit is water tight, it can be easily used to store the water until ready for use.

Distribution is the concept of moving the water to the areas of need. This can be as simple as a garden hose or as complex as a pvc piping system. Controlling the movement of water from your storage tank to your garden may involve the most thought and planning.

In conclusion, an [outdoor garden barrel](#) can be as simple as a trashcan and garden hose positioned near your home to catch rain and distribute water when needed to your [bucket or container garden](#).

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My \$10.00 Rain Bucket

This project took about 30 minutes to complete:

Tools Used:

Drill with 1" Spade Bit

1 Sawsall



I purchased a basic vinyl trash can with a lid for about \$10.00

I also purchased a 1" PVC male adapter for about .32

You can find these at your local home improvement store

This will be the exit point for my hose



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Location: I chose this location underneath a main downspout:



I removed the bottom part of the spout just high enough that it would drain into the Rain Bucket.

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I then drilled a 1" hole at the bottom of the Rain Barrel



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I applied some standard pipe joint compound and put it on the threads and screwed the adapter in from the inside.



Now that I have the exit for the hose, I am ready to cut the access for the downspout

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Once I lined up the Downspout to the Rain Bucket,
I marked the area and cut the hole using the Sawsall.



After some finagling, it was nice and tight.

I caulked the opening to keep mosquitoes from entering

I also added an overflow near the top and inserted an exit downspout

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I attached the garden hose to the bottom adapter and filled it with water to test it out.



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I ran the hose down about 50 feet from the Rain Bucket and tested the pressure...



Not bad for my first attempt!