

## 7 Point Check List

Know the local regulations before you buy!

### 1. Select the right rain barrel system:

Calculate the catchment area, where you want to use the water, how quickly the barrel will fill in a rain event, where to safely direct the overflow spillway. Make sure it does not overflow onto your foundations! Install it out of direct sunlight to avoid algae blooms.

**2. Make sure the site is level :** Insure there is a solid foundation of pavers or gravel. Then build a strong stand for the rain barrel, using concrete block or hefty wood. The stand must be capable of holding over 180 kg. or 400 lbs and raise the barrel high enough for a garden watering jug to be filled, and/or a hose to be attached using gravity feed. Secure it to the house.

**3. Right Tap—Right Place:** Insure your rain barrel faucet is no more than 4” above the bottom. This is to make sure you can use almost all the water in the barrel.

**4. Stop Mosquitos:** Insure all openings are covered with mesh to avoid mosquitos being able to access the barrel and lay eggs.

**5. Never use as Potable Water:** A rain barrel contents can never be used to provide drinking water. Your rain barrel should have the warning written on it, in plain sight.

**6. Check the System:** Regularly check the gutters, downspouts and diversion equipment for debris to make sure it is not ending up in the rain barrel and contaminating it.

**7. Clean and Maintain:** Make sure to clean and maintain the rain barrel system, and drain completely before winter.

Excellent links to information on rain barrel installation and maintenance:

Slow it. Spread it. Sink it.: [www.obwb.ca](http://www.obwb.ca)

### How to Correctly Install a Rain Barrel:

<http://www.secondrain.com/2011/01/how-to-correctly-install-a-rain-barrel/>

### Videos:

#### Full Downspout Diversion Installation:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OzG0gbkA47s>

#### Partial Downspout Diversion System:

(available at Canadian Tire Stores)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-QJTS-fEXOw> *Very thorough video*

**Rain Water Management:** [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p\\_LXQGqUj9o](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p_LXQGqUj9o)

Would you like to learn more about rain barrels or ask a question?

Call: Engineering Services Projects

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A nicely installed rain barrel. **But**, in the Okanagan, it is not recommended to use a wooden barrel. The intense summer heat dries the wood and they leak.

Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen

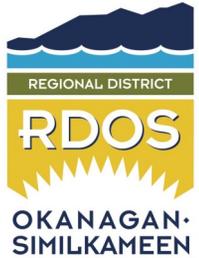
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Public Works  
Department

## Rain Barrels Tips and Tricks



And, What to Avoid

## Why A Rain Barrel?

Rain Barrels and runoff catchment systems can be a great benefit to your home and garden. The Okanagan and Similkameen areas have already been experiencing more extreme weather events and longer dry periods. These changes prompt us to think about harvesting rain water for re-use on the landscape.

Rain barrels are often the first rain water re-use apparatus homeowners gravitate toward. They are readily available and not prohibitively expensive. Many options and instructions for making your own rain barrel are on the internet or RDOS web site. Some good reasons for a rain barrel include:

- Recycle untreated rain water for landscape irrigation; plants love it
- Reduce storm water runoff
- Reduce the use of potable water
- Retain water for times of scarcity



An example of a Commercial and correctly installed home-made rain barrels



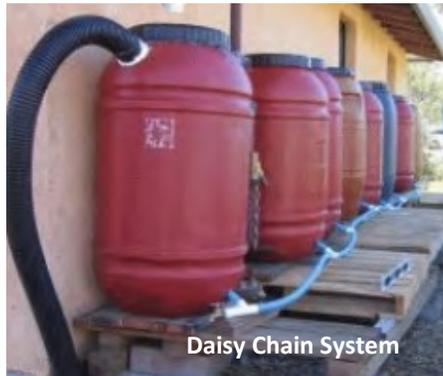
Along with all the benefits of installing and using rain barrels, there are some important considerations that should be thought about before a rain barrel is installed.

## Important Things to Consider

### What?....

- Average amounts of rain fall in my area?
- Do I want the rain barrel to water?
- Roof or collection area will feed the rain barrel—square footage?
- What style of down spout collection system do I want to install: (full or partial)? What are the differences?
- If I am not at home during a major rain event? Where is the overflow going to go Will it cause an issue?
- Tools are required to install it?
- Maintenance does it require?
- Type of non commercially bought rain barrel is safe to be used?
- If I want more than one? How do I connect them?
- Do I need to make sure is all done before I cut the downspout on my house?

These questions should be answered before an installation goes wrong or the rain barrel becomes a disappointment.



Daisy Chain System

## Making Your Own Rain Barrel

It can be very rewarding (and quite easy) to make your own rain barrel. Here are some quick tips to get you started.

- Use only food safe polymer barrels. These barrels do not off gas into the water, and do not absorb anything from the contents
- Use a plumbing wholesaler for your fixtures: bulkhead fittings, spigots, and overflow kits as they are cost effective
- Hole saws and wood bits work well to cut the holes for fittings. A Jig saw will work for the clean out hole at the top (6" diameter).
- Make sure the rain barrel overflow is at least 1.5" (or larger than the inflow). This insures that overflow water can exit the system faster than a downpour can fill it.

## Bi-lingual Water facts

• An average rain event of 25mm on a 140 sq. m<sup>3</sup> roof = 3,500 litres or 924 gallons of water. This can take as little as 15 minutes in a downpour!

• An average yearly rainfall in the Okanagan is 250 mm or between 28 to 35,000 litres of runoff from the average roof.

• Raising your rain barrel by even a few inches will improve your water pressure. Build a sturdy base, because at roughly 8 pounds per gallon, your 55-gallon barrel weighs over 400 pounds.