

# RAIN BARREL BUYERS GUIDE

Interested in getting a rain barrel for your home but not sure where to start? This guide will help you through the process by asking a few important questions.

## WHERE AM I GOING TO PUT MY BARREL?

Take a walk around your home and take note of a few important features. Where are your downspouts, gardens, planters, landscape beds, and other features you may want to water? It's helpful to determine the general direction rain water flows off your property during a storm.



**TIP:** The best location for a rain barrel is where there is both a downspout to drain water into the barrel and a garden bed or planter where you will drain the water out of the barrel.

Roof Area (sq ft)	Rainfall (inches)			
	0.25	0.5	0.75	1.0
100	16	31	47	62
250	39	78	117	156
500	78	156	234	312
750	117	234	351	468
1000	156	312	468	623
1250	195	390	584	779
1500	234	468	701	935
1750	273	545	818	1091
2000	312	623	935	1247
2250	351	701	1052	1403
2500	390	779	1169	1558
2750	429	857	1286	1714
3000	468	935	1403	1870
	Rain Harvest (gallons)			

## HOW MUCH WATER WILL THERE BE?

Once you have picked your location, it is important to figure out how much water you will come off the roof. The amount of water will depend on the roof size (area in square feet) and the inches of rainfall during a particular storm. Measure the contributing roof length and width in feet.  $LENGTH \times WIDTH = ROOF \text{ AREA (SQ FT)}$ . Find the closest number in the table at left. The table shows the approximate amount of water you will harvest for different sized rain storms. For example, a 100 square foot roof will shed about 16 gallons of water in a quarter-inch rain storm.

## HOW MUCH RAIN CAN I EXPECT?

It's best to look to the weather forecast to give you an idea of how much rain you can expect during any single given storm. But for planning purposes, check out this table below that shows the average rainfall each month in Kalamazoo, Michigan.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Avg. precipitation (in)	2.0	1.6	2.6	3.5	3.4	3.7	3.7	3.5	4.1	2.9	3.1	2.9

## HOW DO I HOOK UP THIS THING?

Use a fine-toothed saw, like a hacksaw to cut your downspout about 3-6 inches above the top of your barrel. You might have to buy a flex elbow if your downspout is too close to the building, which will allow you to better direct the water into the barrel. Account for the height of your elbow before cutting into the downspout. There is an alternative to cutting your downspout -- a diverter can be installed in-line with the downspout so that water can either be directed through the diverter and into the barrel, or bypass the diverter and drain down the downspout normally. [Check out this video...](#)

## WHAT IF MY RAIN BARREL OVERFLOWS?

It is always important to plan for your barrel over filling with water. It is bound to happen if we get an extreme storm or you do not have time to empty it between storms. Upcycle Products fits each rain barrel with a valve at near the top of the barrel. By attaching a standard hose to the barrel, you can link it to a second barrel or simply lead the hose away from your home to an appropriate area that can handle the extra water (e.g., a low spot in your lawn or sandy area that can soak in a lot of water). Any water that is allowed to collect near foundation of a building can cause damage.

## HOW TO I WINTERIZE MY RAIN BARREL?

- Drain your rain barrel
- Clear debris from barrel and filter screen
- As an extra precaution, turn upside-down to allow to drain
- Keep spigot open (covering is optional)

## SAFETY FIRST!

- Keep the top secured shut – this is a child-proofing measure, but can also prevent other things from getting into the barrel
- Don't drink the rain water from your rain barrel
- Beware of using the collected water in your vegetable garden if you have anti-moss Zinc strips or have treated your roof with other anti-moss chemicals
- If you have mosquito problems, consider a "mosquito donut" containing *Bacillus thuringiensis* ssp. *israelensis*, a bacterium which safely infects and kills mosquito larvae.