FAQ's:

Do I have to do it JUST like this?
No. This can be used as a guideline. Holes may be put in whatever location works best for your house. Or other changes can be made as you prefer.

Can I paint it?
Yes, barrels can be painted using spray paint designed for adhering to plastic such as Krylon Plastic Fusion or Rust-Oleum Plastic Primer. You can also be creative with your rain barrel by building a structure around it, or perhaps some fencing that ivy or other climbing plants can attach to making it a natural "screen."

How can I increase the water pressure?
Rain barrels rely on gravity for pressure so the higher the rain barrel is raised, the more pressure it has. For watering gardens, attaching a soaker hose works wonderfully.

What about mosquitoes?
The netting over the atrium basket should deter most mosquitoes, but eggs may still drop through. There are several additional ways to ensure their absence. One method is adding a tablespoon of vegetable oil each season or try a mosquito dunk wh ich can be purchased at most home supply stores. This biological pest control product kills mosquito larvae but is completely non-toxic to plants and animals such as fish, birds, wildlife and pets. Each dunk kills mosquito larvae for 30 days or more.

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Rain barrel on front cover painted by Charli Stout.

How to make a Rain Barrel

WATERSHED CENTER

JAMES RIVER BASIN PARTNERSHIP

Why use a rain barrel?

An average home with a roof size of 1,000 square feet will generate approximately 600 gallons of water from a 1-inch rainfall. Collecting and using this water with rain barrels helps reduce the demand on public and private water supplies, and reduces pollution, flooding, and erosion in local waterways by reducing storm water runoff.

How do I use the water?

The water that you collect in your rain barrel can be used to water indoor and outdoor potted plants and landscaped areas, clean off gardening tools, wash your car, and for other non-potable uses.

What do I need to get started?

You will need the following supplies:

- 55 gallon plastic (food grade) barrel
- Silicone
- Felt tip pen
- Teflon tape
- 4" atrium basket
- Old pantyhose or knee highs
- Flexible downspout
- (2) 3/4" hose bib

Tools needed:

- Jigsaw
- 1" holesaw
- Hacksaw (for cutting downspout if desired)

Directions:

Clean out barrel as needed.

Place atrium basket upside down over bung hole and trace.

Use jigsaw to cut out hole just inside of traced line.

Decide which side you want your overflow valve, then measure down 2" from the top of barrel.

Drill hole using 1" holesaw.

Repeat procedure for the bottom of the barrel. This will be your main spigot where you can either attach a hose or use to fill a bucket or watering can.

Drill hole using 1" holesaw from bottom of the barrel.

Wrap spigot threads with Teflon tape.

Put a bead of silicone around hole.

Screw spigot into hole and let dry.

Do this with both spigots.

Cover bottom of atrium basket with foot of pantyhose and drop in the hole on top of the barrel.

May need to line the edge of the hole with silicon and then let dry before placing basket in hole to ensure a tight fit.

At this point paint barrel if desired (see FAQ on back page).

Elevate the constructed barrel next to down-spout. Concrete blocks work well. Bend flexible downspout into the basket, align with structure's downspout, and mark where the flexible downspout will be connected.

Using a hacksaw, make a horizontal cut on the the structure's downspout.

Attach flexible down-spout to regular downspout.

Attach piece of hose to overflow valve and direct away from your home's foundation.

Be sure to let all silicone dry thoroughly before filling with rain.

Enjoy your new rain barrel!

Rain Barrel Use and Care:

Place on raised surface to increase water pressure.

Keep screen free of debris.

Clean out gutters on a regular basis or use gutter screens.

Unhook barrel in winter to prevent freezing.

Direct overflow outlet away from foundation. Use water in barrel regularly so it will be empty for next rain.

For more information, contact:
The City of O'Fallon, MO
Stormwater Management
(636) 240-2000

Information provided in this brochure is courtesy of James River Basin Partnership and Watershed Center