

# Rain Barrel Construction

## Tools Required

- Jig Saw or Reciprocating Saw
- Drill
- 1" Drill Bit (spade bit will work but a regular bit bores a smoother hole)
- 1 1/2" Drill Bit for bulkhead tank fitting and spigot
- Crescent Wrench and/or a 1 1/16" Deep Socket and Wrench
- Staple Gun
- Scissors or Utility Knife
- Hacksaw

## Parts List (Single Barrel)

- Food-Grade Plastic, 55-gal. Barrel
- 3/4" Hose Bibb (MIP Threaded Inlet) (Plastic or Brass Spigot)
- 3/4" X 3/4" Pipe to Garden Hose Connector
- Large Washers (1" I.D. to fit over overflow connector)
- Fiberglass Window Screen Material
- Bricks or Cement Blocks
- Teflon Tape (Plumber's Tape)
- 3/4" Bulkhead Tank Fitting with 1 1/2" mounting hole



Bulkhead Tank Fitting



## BARRELS

- If you are using a used 55-gallon barrel, make sure to wash it out even though food products were the only stored items.
- Barrels can be purchased new or used at several locations. The most economical place to buy barrels is directly from food or juice processing plants. Industrial strength 44-gallon trash containers may be used if barrels are hard to track down.

---

**Hardware** - Orscheln Farm and Home 479-750-9967 516 E. Emma Ave., Springdale AR 72764

---

## Step 1: Preparation

Mark all cuts and holes to be drilled on your cleaned 55-gallon barrel. The overflow hole can be located on either side of the barrel and should be at least two inches from the top edge of the barrel. The spigot hole should also be 2-3 inches from the bottom edge of the barrel.

## Step 2: Cutting and Drilling



Drill a pilot hole in the top of the barrel to start your saw blade. Cut the top off of the barrel using a jig saw or reciprocating saw. Make sure to leave at least 1" of the barrel top to secure the fiberglass screen later. Next, drill the spigot hole using a 1 1/2" drill bit. Drill the overflow hole at the top of your barrel with a 1" drill bit. Use a utility knife or other sharp edge to clean the plastic burrs from all holes and cuts.



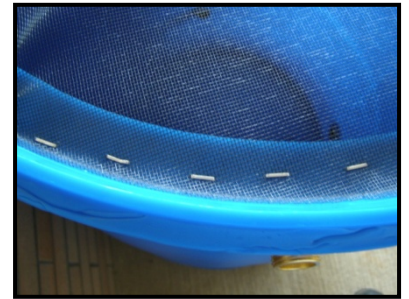
### **Step 3: Inserting Fixtures and Fittings**

Insert the bolt-shaped end of the bulkhead tank fitting into the barrel from the outside. One washer on the tank fitting goes on the outside of the barrel and the other is on the inside with the nut of the tank fitting. These fittings have left-handed threads so tightening seems backwards. Wrap the spigot in Teflon tape and insert into the bulkhead tank fitting. Wrap the machine thread (fine threads) end of the overflow connector and thread the wrapped end into the overflow hole. Use a washer between the barrel and the overflow adaptor to give more support to the fitting.



### **Step 4: Screening the Top of Your Barrel**

Cut your fiberglass screen large enough to cover the entire top of your barrel. Staple one edge of the screen to the rim of the barrel. Stretch the screen fairly tight and staple the screen to the opposite side of the barrel. Work your way around the rim of the barrel keeping the screen tight as you staple. Trim off the excess screening material with a utility knife or scissors to give it a clean appearance.



### **Step 5: Installing Your Rain Barrel**

Your rain barrel needs to be raised above the ground to provide enough head pressure to water your plants. This watering system works by gravity. Many times people use concrete blocks or landscape blocks to raise their rain barrels off of the ground and provide lift. Once you know the height of the barrel, it is time to cut the downspout. Disconnect the elbow at the bottom of your downspout. Hold the disconnected elbow up to the downspout to mark where to cut the downspout to provide at least two inches between the elbow and the rain barrel so that the barrel can be easily removed for future maintenance. Cut the downspout at the line and reconnect the elbow to the downspout.



Remove downspout and cut it at the appropriate length.



Reconnect the elbow and downspout to the gutter.

## **ENJOY YOUR NEW RAIN BARREL!**

Remember to use a short section of hose to divert your overflow to an area that is resistant to erosion. Not connecting an overflow hose will cause an area of erosion where the overflow water shoots out onto the ground.