

DIY Trash Can Composter and Rain Barrel

Trash Can Compost Bin



This is not a new idea but when I found it, I thought what a great way for residents to have a compost pile without spending a fortune. It is just the right size for the backyard. With a locking lid to keep critters out and small enough to maneuver around your yard/garden.

Materials:

- * Rubber garbage can with a locking lid (Choose the size that is manageable but will still produce enough compost for your needs. A metal can could be used as well just make sure the lid locks.)
- * Drill with a 1/2 inch twist bit or a hole saw bit
- * Bricks, pavers or concrete blocks (to raise the garbage can off the ground)
- * Yard Waste

Directions:

- * Drill holes in the bottom and on the sides of the garbage can to provide plenty of air circulation.
- * Place the garbage can on bricks, pavers or concrete blocks to raise it off the ground. This allows air to circulate under the can and prevent the composting material from becoming stagnant. Some gardeners prefer that the garbage can sit on the ground so earthworms can help with the composting.
- * Add uncooked vegetable scraps, dried leaves, grass clippings, and disease-free plant material. It is helpful to chop the vegetables into small pieces so that they will break down quickly.

Keep the compost moist and turn it every two weeks. To turn, just put the garbage can on its side and roll it around. Make sure the lid is locked in place. A piece of rebar or a bulb auger attached to a drill are also tools for stirring up the compost. Be mindful of how much you put into your compost bin. You don't want it to become too heavy to manage. If space allows, I suggest you build 2 trash can composters so that you can allow one to compost while you fill the other.

Here are some things you can put into your composter:

- * Uncooked vegetables and fruits. Be sure to cut them up into small pieces so they will break down faster. (helpful with a small compost bin)
- * Grass clippings
- * Dried leaves
- * Disease free plant material
- * Shredded paper

Hint: If your compost bin starts to smell, it is not getting enough air. Simply turn the can and add more brown material such as dried leaves.

Rain Barrel

Rain barrels are an old fashioned way to conserve water and many people are turning back the hands of time and returning back to using them to collect water for yards and gardens. The increased popularity goes hand in hand with the increased need for water conservation. Our forefathers used this method when rainfall was short. Today we should use it to conserve water. Lawn and garden irrigation makeup nearly 40% of total household water use in the summer. A rain barrel collects water, over 700 gallons of water will run off the average roof during a 1-inch of rain in a 24 hour period, and stores it for when you need it to water plants, clean gardening tools, wash your car, etc. A rain barrel will also divert all this water from the storm drains decreasing the impact of stormwater runoff. A rain barrel can save most homeowners about 1300 gallons of water during the peak summer months. Your rain barrel can be as elaborate or as simple as you please.

Materials:

- ◆ Plastic Drum (use food-quality containers, not ones that held harsh chemicals) (Clear or translucent can speed the growth of algae, which can clog pipes.)
- ◆ 3/4 inch male thread spigot (with slant head)
- ◆ PVC Cement
- ◆ Bricks, pavers or concrete blocks (to raise the rain barrel off the ground)
- ◆ Optional: caulking, screen, large screws/bolts, bungee cord

Tools:

- ◆ Drill (hand or electric)
- ◆ 15/16-inch drill bit
- ◆ Sabre or Hand saw



Directions:

- ◆ Drill 15/16-inch hole at the first even part of the barrel-about 6 to 8 inches from the barrel bottom.
- ◆ Screw 3/4-inch spigot about half-way into the hole (this should be a very tight fit).
- ◆ Apply the PVC cement to the exposed threads and finish screwing the spigot into the drum.
- ◆ If using a downspout, use a sabre saw to cut a hole in the lid so that the downspout fits tightly. Caulking can be applied where the downspout meets the barrel top.
- ◆ Elevate barrel on bricks, pavers or concrete blocks laying on their sides. This will allow easy access to the spigot and provide adequate water pressure.

Options:

- ◆ Use an open lid barrel. Drill large screws/bolts into the drum, below the threads. Use a small-mesh screen over the top of the barrel, with the screen edges overlapping the screws/bolts. Use a bungee cord to hold the screen in place by placing around the barrel just below the screws/bolts.
- ◆ Adding or connecting an overflow pipe or linking multiple barrels together will carry excess water into the second barrel or direct it to a specific part of your yard or into a close by garden. This is a great way to reduce water around the foundation of your house during rain.

HINT: Connecting a soaker hose to your rain barrel gives you a great way to water shallow rooted plants. A rain barrel takes approximately 8-10 hours to empty using a soaker hose.

SAFETY:

- ◆ **Barrel should be made from food-grade container made to hold liquid.**
- ◆ **Place on level ground on bricks, pavers or concrete blocks. A full barrel can weigh over 500 lbs.**
- ◆ **Make sure to monitor overflow to eliminate erosion problems.**