**How To Build a Rain Barrel**

By Christian Miller

**Tools**
- Drill
- 1” spade bit
- Jig saw

**Supplies**
- Reconditioned Food Grade Drum*
- ¾” male threaded spigot
- Gutter downspout attachment
- Plumbers tape (Teflon) or pipe dope
- Concrete blocks
- Screening

**Directions**
*Be sure to use only food-grade containers. Reconditioned food-grade drums may be found by searching the listings under “Barrels & Drums” in your local yellow pages. Sizes and colors will vary based on availability, but most drums are approximately 55 gallons.*

1. Locate the area which you plan to place the barrel. Keep in mind that a 55 gallon drum, when full of water, could weigh more than 400 pounds. Your location should be close to a downspout or an area where water channels coming off of your roof.

2. Drill a hole about 6” from the bottom of the barrel with the 1” spade bit.

3. Apply plumber’s tape to the exposed threads of the spigot and insert into the hole you drilled in the barrel. This should be a fairly snug fit. Also, be sure the spigot goes in straight rather than at an angle. Continue screwing in the spigot until it is flush to the barrel. The tape will ensure a water tight seal.
4. Level the ground where you plan on placing your barrel, and use several concrete blocks to elevate the barrel off the ground. The blocks will allow easy access to the spigot and provide some water pressure.

5. If connecting to a downspout, cut a hole in the top of the barrel so that the downspout fits snuggly into the top of the container. You may need to make minor modifications to the downspout itself depending on where you decide to place the barrel. You can find flexible downspout attachments with the guttering supplies at any home hardware supply store.

6. If you don’t have gutters, use an open top container or cut a large hole in the top of a closed-head container. Use a small-mesh screen to cover the top of the container, and secure it to the barrel with bungee chords or rope.

7. You may want to add an overflow to your container (Fig. 1, A). Barrels can fill rapidly in even moderate rains. This can be as simple as adding another spigot to the top of the barrel, and using an old garden hose to direct the overflow away from your house. You can also connect multiple barrels using standard pvc pipe available at any home hardware supply store (Fig. 1, B). When connecting multiple barrels, use pipe of at least 1” diameter in order to ensure adequate water flow.

Also, Ensuring a tight fit on all connections, or proper screening, will prevent mosquitoes from laying eggs in your barrel.

For more information on this and other topics, visit the Miami-Dade County Cooperative Extension Website at [http://miami-dade.ifas.ufl.edu](http://miami-dade.ifas.ufl.edu)