



How to Paint a Rain Barrel

Fact Sheet # ACFFL

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GETTING STARTED

Rain barrels are great ways to reuse stormwater collected in your landscape for your plants. Typically, rain barrels made from recycled or repurposed products are aesthetically less than desirable.

Painting or decorating a rain barrel is a great opportunity to showcase your rain barrel and add a fun, decorative talking point in your landscape. To get started you will need items from the following list.

Rain Barrel Supplies

- Spray Paint Primer for Plastic, two cans per barrel
- Acrylic Paint (Crafter's Paint, Acrylic Tube, House Paint)
- Poly Acrylic Top Coat
- Palette
- Chalk
- Permanent Markers
- Painter's Tape
- Brushes
- Sponge Brush
- Spray Bottle
- Paper Towels



Preparing Your Rain Barrel

1. Clean-Clean-Clean. Make sure your rain barrel is clean by using a dish detergent to make certain your surface is clear of any dirt, grease or oil. A dirty rain barrel will prevent the primer from sticking properly. Allow to dry in the sun until it is bone dry before going to the next step.
2. Use a plastic primer to use as your base coat. This will be the foundation to help the rest of your paint to stick properly to the plastic. Please do this in a well-ventilated area and away from anything you don't want ruined by overspray.



Painting the Rain Barrel

1. Once this primer coat is completely dry, you are ready to create your masterpiece. Use your house paint to block in large areas of color. Depending on the colors of your base coat, use chalk/vine charcoal to temporarily draw your image onto your rain barrel. These can easily be erased using a dampened paper towel.
2. Paint in Stages
 - a. Stage One: Apply Base Coat
 - b. Stage Two: Block Big Areas like sky, water, ground, and large items
 - c. Stage Three: Get a feel for the layout and organization of your rain barrel.
 - d. Stage Four: Add Detail. Use permanent markers, if you feel you have more control than a brush, to outline or draw lines. Do not forget shadows and highlights-this will make you rain barrel *pop* more.
3. Once your rain barrel is 100% completed and dried, add clear coats of a poly acrylic topcoat to help protect the painting.

You are now done with painting your rain barrel. Not only do you have a functional water storage container that saves water and money, you have a rain barrel that is a unique piece of art.

Tips and Ideas

- When you are painting, try to remember that the first few stages of your painting will be rough. Don't get discouraged. The more you work with it, the better it will look.
- Inspiration can come from anywhere. In fact, take a trip to your local library. Sit down and enjoy gardening magazines or anything you might find inspiring. Even a color combination might catch your eye. Photo copy or take a picture of the image. This is just used for inspiration and ideas for your own creations. The internet is also a wealth of images.
- A fantastic resource for paint is at your local recycle center located off Waldo Road a few miles north of the Extension office. It's free and a great way to reduce, reuse and recycle.
- If you can, save your leftover bits of mixed paint until you're completely done. This comes in handy for touch-ups or last minute changes. You can even have a particular color you just love color-matched at any paint store and used in other areas of the garden.
- When mixing your colors, a helpful hint is to use the same colors throughout your painting. Example: use the same blue you used for the sky to mix your green for the grass by adding the same yellow you used for the sunflower.
- Using a stencil works too. But why stop there? Add your personal touch by painting detail on top and give it the special "something".
- The most important thing of all is to remember to have FUN. Play your favorite music working on your rain barrel and just let your creative juices fly.