

Rain Barrel Painting Guide

A simple step-by-step guide to creating a decorative rain barrel while supporting stormwater management.

Why Paint a Rain Barrel?

Rain barrels help reduce stormwater runoff and conserve water. A painted barrel can also become an attractive landscape feature that promotes environmental awareness.

Step 1: Clean

Wash the exterior with warm soapy water, remove labels and adhesive residue, rinse thoroughly, wipe down with a vinegar-water solution, and allow the barrel to dry.

Step 2: Prep & Prime

Lightly sand the exterior, remove dust, cover fittings, and apply two coats of adhesion promoter. Allow the barrel to cure for 24 hours.

Step 3: Paint & Protect

- Apply two coats of black gesso, allowing each coat to dry for 24 hours.
- Create your design using outdoor acrylic paints.
- Apply a UV-resistant clear protective coating after the artwork is fully dry.
- Reapply protective coating periodically to maintain durability.

Recommended Supplies

Dish soap, scrub brush, vinegar, 220-grit sandpaper, lint-free towels, adhesion promoter, black gesso, outdoor acrylic paints, artist brushes, masking tape, and UV-resistant sealer.

Helpful Tips

Work outdoors when temperatures exceed 60°F, allow adequate drying time between steps, and consider using stencils or simple patterns for your first design.

Stormwater Benefit

Just one inch of rain on a 1,000-square-foot roof can generate more than 600 gallons of water. Capturing that water in a rain barrel helps reduce runoff, erosion, and pollution in local waterways.