

Rain Barrel Tips: Diverters

The market offers a number of solutions to the problem of connecting your down spout to the rain barrel. Some direct all the downspout water into the barrels while others automatically redirect the water back into the downspout once the rain barrel is full.

Simple Direct Diverter



The "Save the Rain" diverter offered through Great American Rain Barrel is very easy to install and captures all the water. You just cut off the downspout, insert this square diverter to guide the water into the barrel, and reconnect the bottom of the downspout to the bottom of the diverter.

This diverter captures all the rain. You do, however, have to consider what happens when the barrel gets full. Once the barrel is full, you can manually close the diverter spout so the water runs down the downspout again. Or you can leave it open and allow the excess water to run down the sides of the barrel, if you don't have to worry about an erosion problem. You can also

attach a hose to one of the ports near the top of the barrel to redirect the overflow back into the original downspout or direct the flow to some other safe area. You might need two outlets and hoses to handle a heavy downpour.

Automatic Diverters



Also available are "automatic" diverters like the one I use, the "Earth Minded" kit, widely available online and at local places like Lowe's and Home Depot. This one is harder to install, although the kit is quite complete, including hole-saw bits and all the needed fittings and hoses. It probably does not capture all of the rain in the downspout.

Rather than cut off the downspout, you drill a hole in the side. A clever funnel-type device goes into the downspout through the hole. When the barrel gets full, the funnel gets full, and the excess rain just continues on its way down the downspout. At the end of the season, you remove the funnel and cover the hole with the cap provided.

This type of diverter can become clogged with leaves. It is prudent to check it several times a year to clear out any debris.