



Farm to School

Garden Lesson: Introduction to Watering the Garden

Objectives:

Children will learn that plants need water just like people and animals need water. They will explore dry and wet soil and be able to describe the difference between them. Children will practice testing soil for dampness using their fingers. Children will be introduced to a rain gauge and its purpose.

Materials:

Garden soil
Two shallow buckets or containers
Water and watering cans
Rain Gauge

Preparation:

Put dry garden soil in each of the shallow buckets or containers. Add water to only one bucket and mix until the soil is very damp.

Lesson:

Review the things plants need to survive. Highlight that plants need water almost every day, just like people need water. How does nature provide water for plants? What do gardeners need to do if it hasn't rained? (Water the plants!) Tell students there are several things gardeners use when they are watering their plants: a watering can (hold one up) and their fingers: their fingers to test the soil, and the watering can to bring water to the plants.

Garden Activity:

Take students to the garden. Tell them they are going to learn how to do a soil test to determine if the garden needs to be watered each day. Bring your shallow buckets of soil. Guide students in taking turns feeling the dry soil and the wet soil. How does each of them feel? Cool, warm, crumbly, clumpy? How does each of them appear? Light, dark? Ask students to gently put their fingers in the soil of the garden bed without disturbing the plants. Does the soil feel wet or dry? Do they think it needs to be watered?

If the soil feels dry, demonstrate watering plants by "drawing" a circle around each plant multiple times with the stream of water. Let the children take turns watering with the watering can if the soil feels dry. Have students retest the soil with their fingers to feel the difference in how it feels after watering.

Tell students many gardeners and farmers use another tool to determine how much they need to water their crops—a rain gauge. Hold up the rain gauge and ask students if they know how it works. If not, explain how a rain gauge works and how to read it.

After teaching the watering lesson, select three students as "watering leaders" each week. Guide those students in testing the garden soil and watering the garden every day of their week. Rotate through the entire class.