



SPRING | Air Weather: What Do You See?

Summary:

The weather is changing constantly and the physical appearance of our plants changes too based on what the weather is like. Growing gardeners will explore the process of observing and charting what they notice about the weather and its effects on the garden each day.

Before Visiting the Garden:

Gather: A journal, pencil, magnifying glass, and coloring materials (based on preference)

Explore: “Corner of the Garden at Montgeron” by Claude Monet—What season do you think it is in this garden? What is the weather like?

Read: *What Will the Weather Be Like Today?* by Paul Rogers

In the Garden:

A great gardener always starts their day looking at their plants. We can learn so much about our plants by observing and charting how they react to changes in weather. Your growing gardener will have the opportunity to keep a journal of these observations throughout the week and think critically about the patterns they see.

Questions to Explore:

- Describe the sky on sunny days, cold days, wet days, and dry days.
- How do people react to different types of weather?
- What do you notice about the plants in our gardens on these different kinds of days? What do they look like?

Activity:

1. Plan your visit for a sunny day so that you can get a baseline of what your plants look like in ideal conditions.
2. Take your journal around the garden and use the magnifying glass to look closely on the leaves of different plants. What do you notice about the leaves? Are the plants growing up or out?
3. Draw your observations in your journal. Make sure to record what the weather was like—sunny, warm?
4. Now, spend the next few weeks charting changes in the weather. Spring is a great time to notice weather variations because the season is changing. One day it’s sunny and the next gale force winds blow! It is so important that you check your plants during these changes, especially when the plants are still getting their roots established. A heavy wind could uproot a young seedling and torrential rains could crush a tender stalk.
5. Keep your journal up to date, paying careful attention to the changes in your plant as it grows, the weather throughout the month, and whatever interventions you did to help keep your plant healthy, such as staking a tomato plant or re-burying roots that were exposed. You can use the information you gather to plan your garden for next year!

Beyond the Garden | Watching Weather in Our State & National Parks

Research a State or National Park near you. Take your gardener and their journal and head out for a hike. Parks are a great spot to observe how weather affects plants in big dramatic ways. Can you find a tree that has been struck by lightning? Do you notice wildflowers facing a particular way (perhaps toward the sun)? How about flooding? Can you see the way that a heavy rain changed where or how grass is growing? Ask a park ranger to tell you about interesting weather events and spots along the trail to spot the evidence. Be sure to record your observations!

Continue Exploring | Supporting Materials

National Parks: <http://www.nps.gov/index.htm>

State Parks: <http://www.americasstateparks.org/>