



Water Conservation Activity



Ready to get started with this activity? To keep track of your progress, check off the instructions for each step below as they are completed. Make sure to check the box of the last step when you're done to receive congratulations for your completed activity!

Consider this: Here in Clark County, Washington, it can seem confusing when we talk about conserving water, since it may feel like it rains all the time in fall, winter, and spring. Then when summer comes around, it gets so hot our plants beg for a cool drink. The project below can be used all year long to help us understand how much rain we receive and how much water we need for our lawn and plants.

1. Gather Your Materials

- Paper
- Marker
- Pencil
- Ruler
- Aluminum Can (emptied and cleaned can of soup, beans, etc.)



2. Prepare the Can

- Line the ruler up alongside a clean recycled can.
- Using a marker, indicate half-inch segments from the bottom of the can to the top.





3. Place the Can and Make Seasonal Reports in Fall, Winter, and Spring

- Set the can on level ground in your yard, on a patio, or balcony. Any place that will receive rain will do!
- Decide how long you will record rain collection.
- Check on a specific day of the week for one month or more.
- Check the can daily for one week or longer.
- Check the can once a month for several months.



4. Record Your Findings in Fall, Winter, and Spring

- Measure the amount of rainwater collected for a specific time frame.
- Record the measurement on a piece of paper.
- Add the measurements up (weekly or monthly).
- Compare your rainfall measurements against the area's average at <https://www.weather.gov/pqr/cliplot> or <https://or.water.usgs.gov/non-usgs/bes/>

5. Place the Can and Make Seasonal Reports in Summer

- Using a marker, indicate half-inch segments from the bottom to the top of the can
- Set the can on level ground where it will receive water from your lawn's sprinkler
- Measure the water collected from a "typical" amount of time
- If the lawn is usually watered for 15 minutes, measure the amount of water collected
- If the water is more than one inch, the time can be adjusted to bring the level closer to one inch
- If the lawn is watered on multiple days in a week, take measurements from each watering
- Add the weekly watering measurements together
- If the amount is more than one inch for each day, the watering time can be adjusted
- Repeat the process for plants, gardens and flower beds
- Record how the plants and lawn respond



9. Things to Think About

Even in summer, a typical lawn only needs one inch of water a week, but the weather can change the needs.

- Do you notice droopy plants? This may indicate too little water.
- Is the ground squishy? This may indicate too much water.
- Do all the sprinklers aim at the lawn and plants?

Sometimes sprinklers water sidewalks, roads or driveways, which doesn't help the plants at all.

- Can adjustments be made to make sure the water is giving living things a drink?
- How much is too much water? Some people love lush green lawns, while others want to make sure their plants are not going to die from the heat.
- Did you know most lawns only need one inch of water per week, and plants need about 50 percent less?

