

Watering/Water Conservation

Time of Year

All year round.

Aim

To learn how to use water wisely in the garden and how to harvest water from the school grounds.

Cross Curriculum Relevance

SESE:	Living things, environmental awareness and care.
Languages:	New words/spelling.
Art:	Making signs/drawings/photographs.
SPHE:	Active and responsible citizenship.
Informal Curriculum:	Green Schools Programme, Discover Primary Science.



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Resources needed

Watering cans, rainwater harvester (barrel, bin or butt under a drainpipe), rain gauge.

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Why Conserve Water?

- Most of the water on our planet is not useable because it is salty or locked away in ice sheets and glaciers.
- We can still get enough water to live because of the water cycle.
- Our quality of life on this planet is directly linked to an abundance of clean, uncontaminated drinking water.
- Clean water is under threat all over the planet because gradually we are using up clean water and replacing it with polluted water.
- Cutting down the amount of water we use is essential for future generations.

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Watering

- All plants need water to grow and they will get most of it from rainfall if they are grown outside.
- In early stages of growth, in the classroom, greenhouse or tunnel and in the summer, plants will need extra watering.
- Carefully water the soil around the plants, not the leaves of the plants as this can damage the plants (especially young plants).
- Water in the morning or the evening to minimise evaporation (in hot weather).
- Mulch around plants with cardboard/newspaper and grass clippings/straw to reduce water loss.



Watering/Water Conservation contd.

Health & Safety

Take care when turning compost heaps. Always wash hands after handling compost. Please refer to the worksheet on Health & Safety for detailed information.

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Water Harvesting

It is possible for the garden to be self sufficient in water by harvesting it from roofs of the school, shelters, sheds and even play areas.

- Water collectors are available from local County Council.
- Barrels can be purchased from the local mart, garden centre or agricultural store.
- Special connectors are available for gutters and down pipes which are easy to install (may come with the butts – if not check local garden centre or hardware shop).
- Ask parents for any old bins they may be able to donate to the school for water collection, these can be placed directly under down pipes.
- Ensure an overflow system is in place for barrels / bins.
- Barrels / bins can be put up on blocks and a tap can be fitted to allow easy filling of watering cans.

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Ideas for Research projects

SESE – why is water important in the garden? How do plants suck up the water from the ground and how is water involved in photosynthesis? Investigate the water cycle, set up a model water cycle in the classroom.

Local Heritage – Is your area getting wetter or drier? How much rain was there 100 years ago? When did they start keeping records of rainfall at weather stations? Visit a local weather station.

Water Harvesting – Investigate water harvesting for flushing toilets and sinks in the school.

Art/communications – make a display for the garden or green schools notice board of the water cycle on how plants get water to their leaves. Make a display on water harvesting.

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Rain Gauge

- Use a rain gauge in the school grounds to measure daily rainfall.
- Try comparing different sites around the school to find out the most sheltered spots.
- Make a bar chart of rainfall throughout the term or year.



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Where to go for more information?

The internet/the library

Local Council – Environmental Officer

ENFO – www.enfo.ie

Tap Tips – www.taptips.ie

askaboutireland – <http://www.askaboutireland.ie>

Wateraid – www.wateraid.org.uk

Discover Primary Science

– www.primaryscience.ie