

Installing and Using a Rain Gauge with Young Children

A [Wild School Gardens](#) Suggestion
from
Healthy Community Food Systems
(www.HCFS.org)

Jim Dyer (jimdyer30@gmail.com)



Why a Rain Gauge?



Helping Kids Understand Water Needs

- Helps kids connect rainfall to their food
- Supports learning about weather, observing nature, measuring, keeping records, and more



Many Types of Rain Gauges



Wedge Gauges are Handy

- The wedge shape "magnifies" the reading
- They are relatively inexpensive (\$15-20)
- The shape usually allows some freezing without breaking, but not really for cold weather



Stratus Type Gauges are for All Seasons

- The scale is easier to read—
"magnified" 10X by the funnel
- Funnel outer tube can be used to collect snow in winter which is melted inside and poured into the inner tube for measurement
- More expensive—about \$40 but will last well



Where to Place the Rain Gauge

- Out in the open as much as possible
- Not under a tree or structure
- Not very close to a tree or other obstacle
- Usually at least twice as far from an obstacle as the height of that obstacle



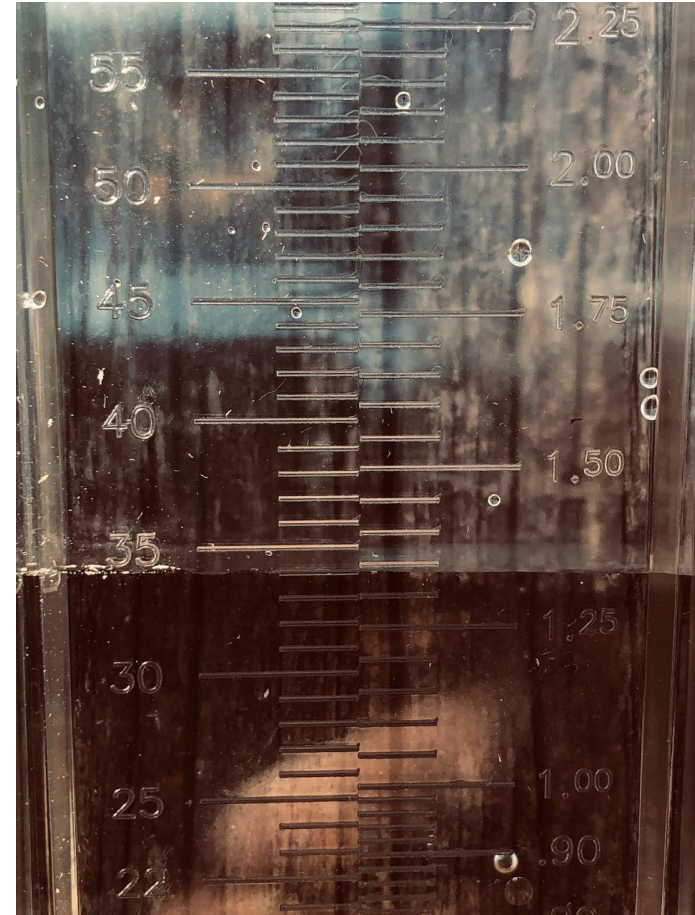
Installing the Rain Gauge

- Opening above the top of post which has a slanted top so water will not splash in
- Far enough off the ground so water won't splash in, but at a good height for kids to see
- Keep the top level so rainfall catch is accurate



Measuring Rainfall

- Best at the same time each day
- Record daily rainfall on a calendar to see patterns over time
- Reading to the nearest hundredth of an inch is the norm, but whatever works for your kids' age level



Reading the Rain Gauge



Exploring

- Have kids put several straight-sided cans around the yard and compare the measurements:
 - before an expected rainfall
 - when yard or garden sprinklers are turned on
 - under trees versus out in the open





More Exploring!



For More Info and Suggestions

- Google “Tru-Chek” to purchase a wedge gauge—roughly \$15-20
- Google “Stratus Rain Gauge” for funnel type gauge—about \$40
- Feel free to try any rain gauge and follow their directions
- See our [Weather and Climate Observations](#) page in our [Foodsheds Field Guide](#)
- Join the [CoCoRaHS](#) program if you wish to submit your school’s precipitation records as a Citizen Science activity
- Contact me, Jim Dyer at jimdyer30@gmail.com for assistance