

# How Does Your Garden Grow?

A garden is the perfect place to practice observational skills, take measurements and make comparisons. Every day something in the garden changes; plants grow at different rates, flowers open and insects visit. Here are some suggestions for observing how quickly the plants in your garden grow.

## Plant Growth

This activity is ideal for spring and summer. By late April many perennial plants are starting to wake up, they will begin growing quickly through May.

### Observation:

Choose and label plants that your class will observe for the next month or so. The number and variety can depend on class size. Choose at least 3 to 4 plants of the same species. Break into groups and assign each group a different species to observe. Determine how often you will make observations and how long you will observe the plants for. During each observation period students can make qualitative descriptions of the plants, count leaves, stems and buds, and measure the height of the plant.

### Data:

The data your class collects can be used to compare how plants in the same species grow depending on their locations. Data can be collected in a spreadsheet and graphed or charted. Calculate the average growth rates for each species.

### Draw Conclusions:

Ask questions like: which one got more sun or water? Does the amount of sun or water the plants received seem to affect how it grows, how many leaves it has or how many flower buds it puts out?

Comparisons can also be made between the average growth rates of each species. Ask questions like: which type of plant grows faster? Are the fastest growing plants the ones that will get the biggest or will bloom first?

If the activity is repeated in following years, students can compare the average growth rates as the garden matures.