



Alabama 4-H Grows

Alabama Cooperative Extension System

Tier II
Garden Journal

www.aces.edu



This garden journal is the property of _____

Getting Started

Step 1: Register for the 4-H Grows Tier II project through 4HOnline. Contact your county Extension office if you need help registering, have questions about the project, or to pay the project fee.

- Date completed: _____

Selecting Your Gardening Site

Step 2: You will need to decide whether your garden will be a traditional garden or a raised bed garden (see below for definitions of both).

Traditional Garden: A traditional garden is one in which you plant your seeds and plants directly into the soil.

Raised Bed Garden: A raised bed garden is one in which you construct a raised garden frame that is at least 6 inches higher than the surrounding soil. The bed is filled with growing media such as a vegetable garden soil mix from a local home and garden store. If you need directions on how to construct a raised bed garden, see Extension publication ANR-1345, "Raised Bed Gardening," or visit <https://www.aces.edu/blog/topics/lawn-garden/raised-bed-gardening/>.

The garden area for tier II should be approximately 40 square feet (4'x10") (not included with project).

When selecting the site, make sure that it will receive at least six to eight hours of direct sunlight each day. It will be helpful if you have a water spigot or water source close by so you can easily water the garden without dragging a long garden hose. The tier II garden project (summer) will provide a larger and broader gardening experience for participants. The summer project will include tomato plants (3), bell pepper (2), banana pepper (2), jalapeño pepper (2), zucchini (2), and yellow squash (2) or comparable plants/seeds.

- Date site selected: _____



Step 3: Preparing the garden for planting by conducting a soil test.

After you have chosen your garden site, you will have to decide whether you need to conduct a soil test (optional). A soil test will indicate how to provide your garden plants with the right types of nutrients for optimal plant development. The cost of the soil test is \$7, which is not covered by 4-H for this project. The following explains how to conduct a soil test if you decide to do one.

Soil Test (Optional)

Traditional Garden: If you are growing a traditional garden, you need to conduct a **routine analysis** soil test. *If the garden has been tested in the past three years, you may skip this test.* The cost for the test is not covered by 4-H for this project. To conduct the test, go to www.aces.edu/blog/topics/forage-soil-testing/routine-soil-analysis and download the routine soil test form (Alabama Extension publication ANR-2307). The instructions for performing the test are on the form. When you have followed the instructions, return your sample to your county Extension office, and they will send it to the Auburn University Soil Testing Laboratory. You should receive the results in about two weeks after submitting the report.

Because you are soil testing a small area, the following formula will help you figure the percentage of an acre that you will be testing. This is important when you take the soil analysis and break it down for your area.



Square feet area of garden/43,560 of acres (square feet in acre) x 100 = % of an acre

Example: 54 square feet/43,560 = 0.001239 x 100 = 0.1239 % of an acre

Raised Bed Garden: If you are gardening in a raised bed garden filled with a commercial garden soil mix, you will not need to conduct a soil test this year. If the garden is three or more years old, you should conduct a special soil test called a **special soil analysis**. When you access the form at www.aces.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/SoilFormRevised.pdf, you will see that there are several choices. The only test you need is the S18 for home garden use in raised beds. The instructions for performing the test are on the form. When you have followed the instructions, return your sample to your county Extension office, and they will send it to the Auburn University Soil Testing Laboratory. You should receive the results about two weeks after submitting the report.

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Example: 54 square feet/43,560 = 0.001239 x 100 = 0.1239 % of an acre

Check one of the following:

- _____ I did not conduct a soil test this year.
- _____ I conducted the soil test this year and have included a copy of the soil test in my journal.
- _____ I followed the soil test recommendations.

Date completed: _____

Step 4: You will be contacted when it is time to pick up your plants from your county Extension office or at a designated site.

Date of delivery to you: _____

Step 5: Begin your Alabama 4-H Grows Project and Journal.

Before you plant, map out your garden using the garden planning page in your journal. Remember to think about proper spacing between plants as you create your garden design. Refer to the following suggested spacing information during this step of the garden project.

Traditional Garden Spacing:

- Tomato plants—24" between plants and 36" between rows
- Bell, banana, and jalapeño pepper plants—18" between plants
- Zucchini and yellow squash seeds per hill—(plant 3 to 5 seeds in an area that is approximately 6-8" in diameter) — 36" between hills and 48" between rows

Raised Bed Garden Spacing:

You will be able to space plants closer in a raised bed garden because it is easier to control watering and plant maintenance.

- Tomato plants—24" between plants and 12" from edge
- Bell, banana, and jalapeño pepper plants—18" between plants and 12" from edge
- Zucchini and yellow squash seeds per hill—(plant 3 to 5 seeds in an area that is approximately 6-8" in diameter) — 24" between hills and 12" from edge

Date design completed: _____

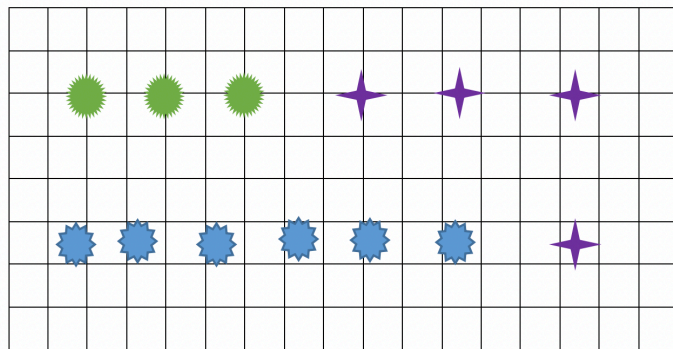


Figure 1. Traditional garden design (1'x1' scale).

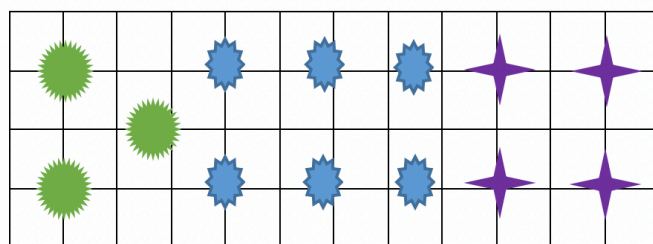
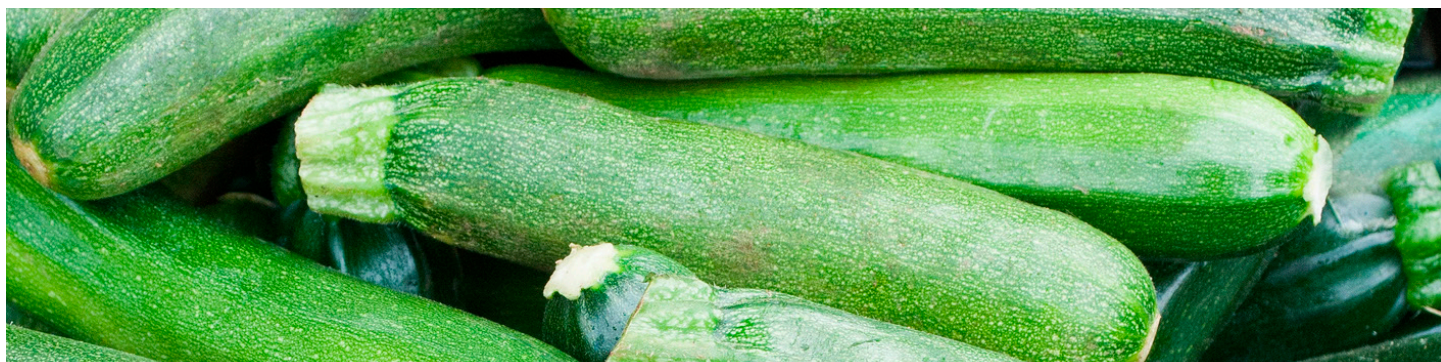
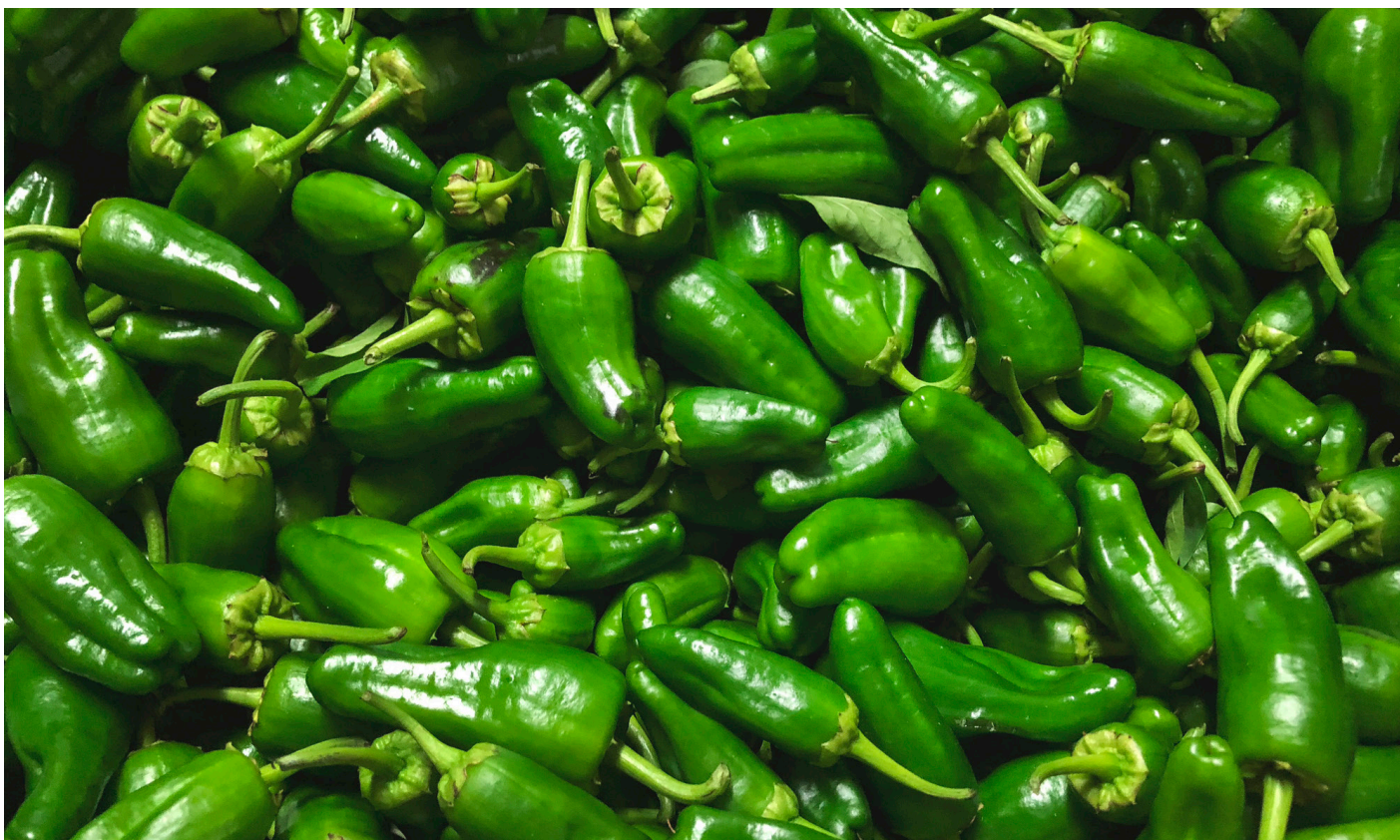


Figure 2. Raised bed garden design (4'x12' garden).

Garden Key

- Tomato
- Peppers
- ✦ Zucchini & Squash





Planting Your Garden

Step 6: Carefully remove the plants from the plant packets, dig a hole deep enough to allow the root ball to be completely buried in the soil. Push the soil back in the hole around the roots and lightly pack the soil around the plant. Water the plants, and they should be ready to grow.

If the plants come in a peat pot, do not remove the pot before planting. Instead, remove the plastic label wrapped around the peat pot, and then tear the pot along the sides. Plant the pot with plant in the soil.

With tomato plants, you can remove the bottom couple of leaves and then plant the roots and part of the stem below the soil level. The stem will sprout roots along the buried part of the stem, helping the plant to develop a bigger root system.

When planting the zucchini and yellow squash seeds, scrape out an area that is about 6 to 8" in diameter to a depth of 1". Spread the seeds over the area, and then cover with the soil and tamp gently.

Date you planted and started your journal: _____

Step 7: Make an entry in the gardening journal every time you interact with your garden (watering, moving containers, or other activity). At minimum, you should be making at least one to two entries per week throughout the gardening project.

When your garden is ready to be harvested, please make an entry in the Alabama 4-H Grows Harvest Journal. (Harvesting may be a one-time event or in the case of many summer vegetables, daily or weekly for a period of several weeks once the produce reaches that point of maturity.)

Complete the Alabama 4-H Grows Weather Charts daily throughout the project. This is important as weather factors such as temperature and rainfall per day all have an impact on the success of your garden.

Garden Planning: Layout

Date plan designed: _____ Time spent on plan: _____

Use the following grid to lay out your garden design. Create a key or label the plants in your garden design. Make sure you show the boundary of your garden on the grid and then locate the plants within the boundary.

A blank sheet of graph paper featuring a uniform grid of squares. The grid consists of 20 columns and 20 rows, totaling 400 small squares. The lines are thin and black, set against a white background. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the page.

What types of produce and number of plants are you planting in the garden?

Comments/observations:

Planting the Plants

Date planted _____

Time Spent in Garden _____

Record the types and number of plants you planted in the garden: _____

Weather Conditions

Record high/low temperature as well as any precipitation/water provided to the garden using weather charts. Use a local weather station to help you find this information.

Air temperature: _____

Soil moisture (check one of the following):

- ☐ Moisture visible at surface without moving soil.
- ☐ No visible signs of moisture in top 2 in. of soil.
- ☐ Signs of moisture visible at 3 in. or deeper.

Water your plants immediately after planting.

In the remaining space, tell us what you did and any observations you made while planting your garden. Take a photo and attach it to this page.

Garden Journal

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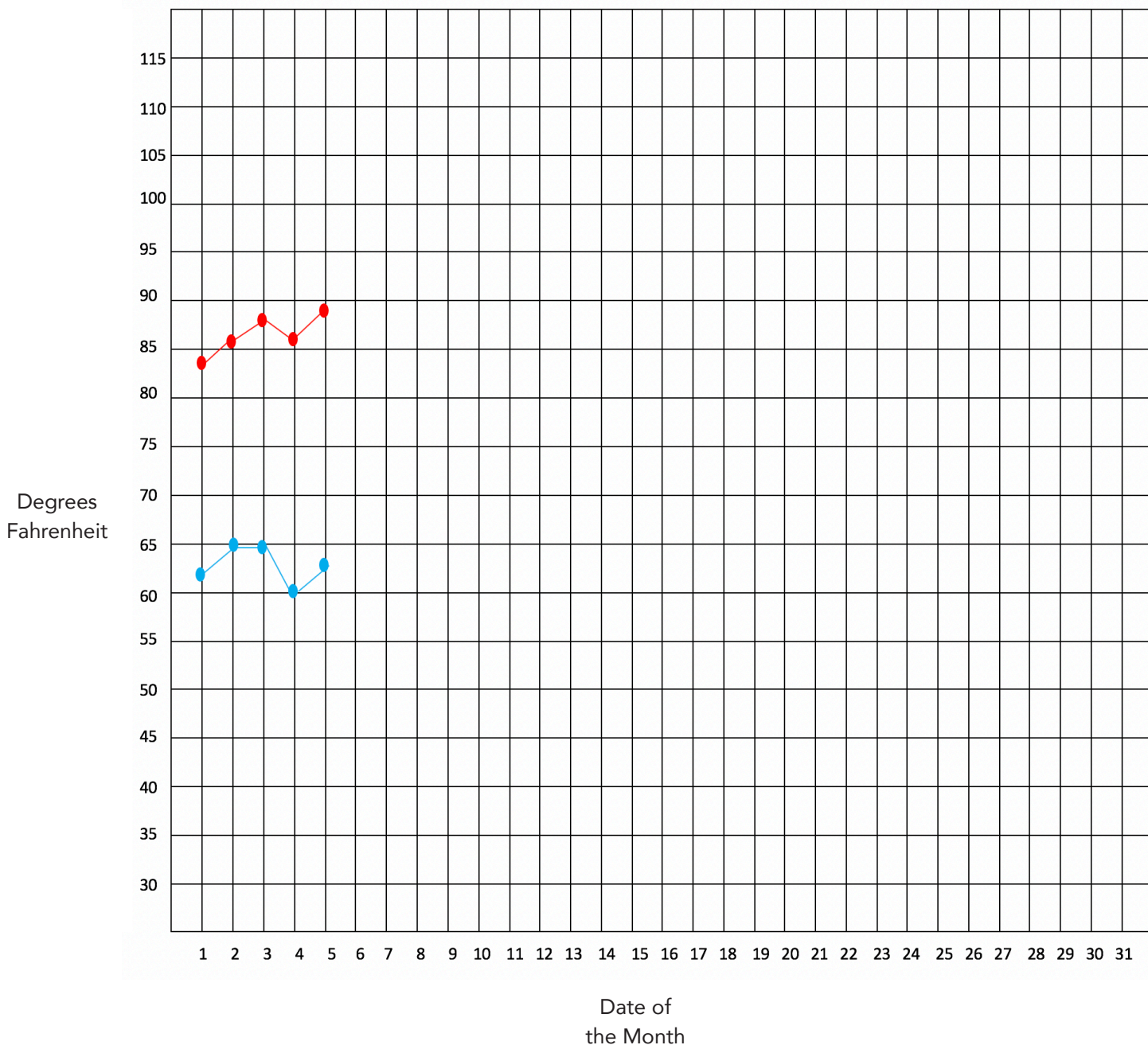
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Weather Charts: Temperature

Using two different colored pencils, record the high and low temperatures for each day on the graph below. Once you record the high and low temperatures, connect with a line all of the highs to one another and all of the lows to one another in sequence.

Example: Red Pencil—Daily High Temperature | Blue Pencil—Daily Low Temperature

Temperature Chart for the Month of _____.

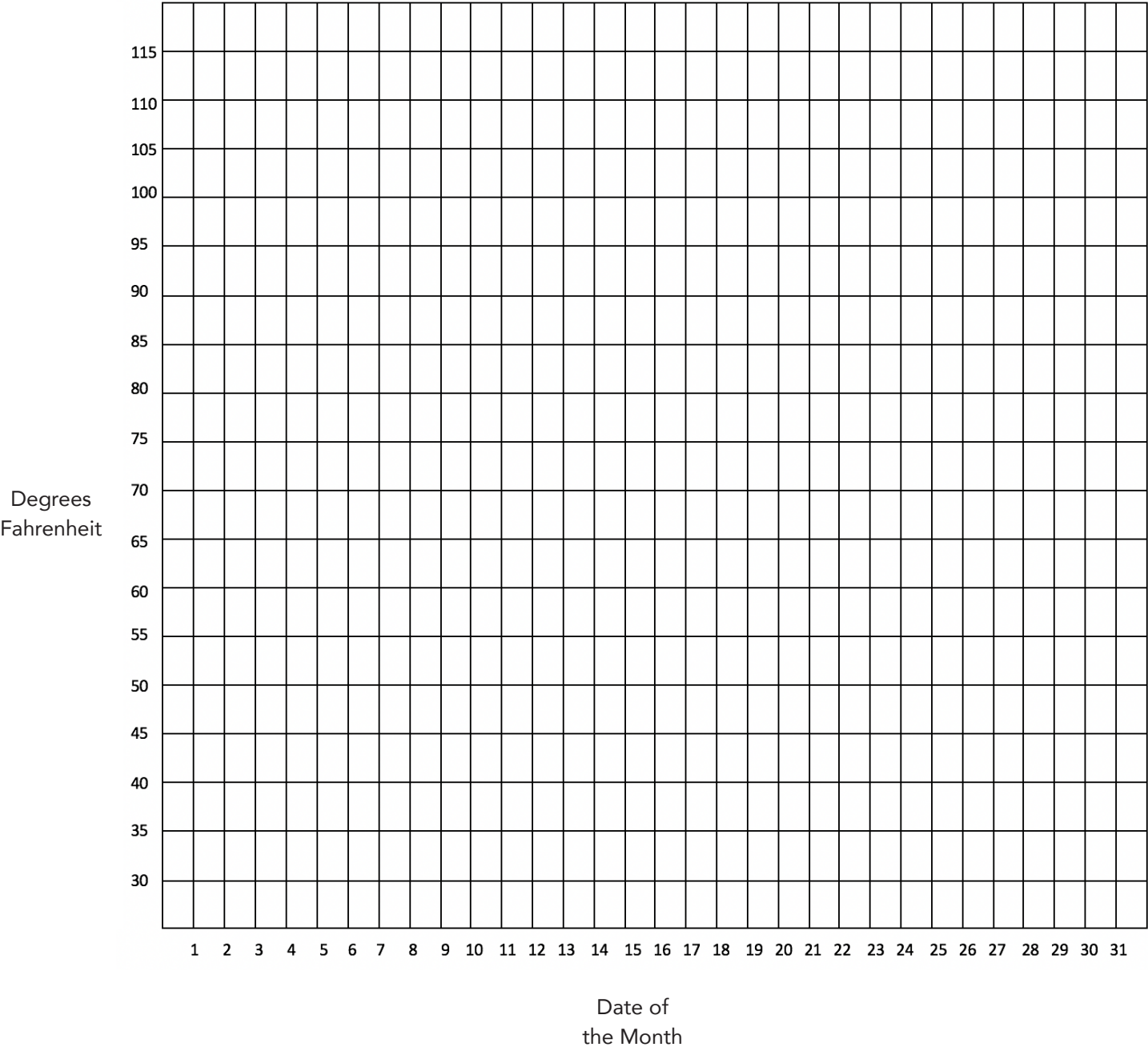


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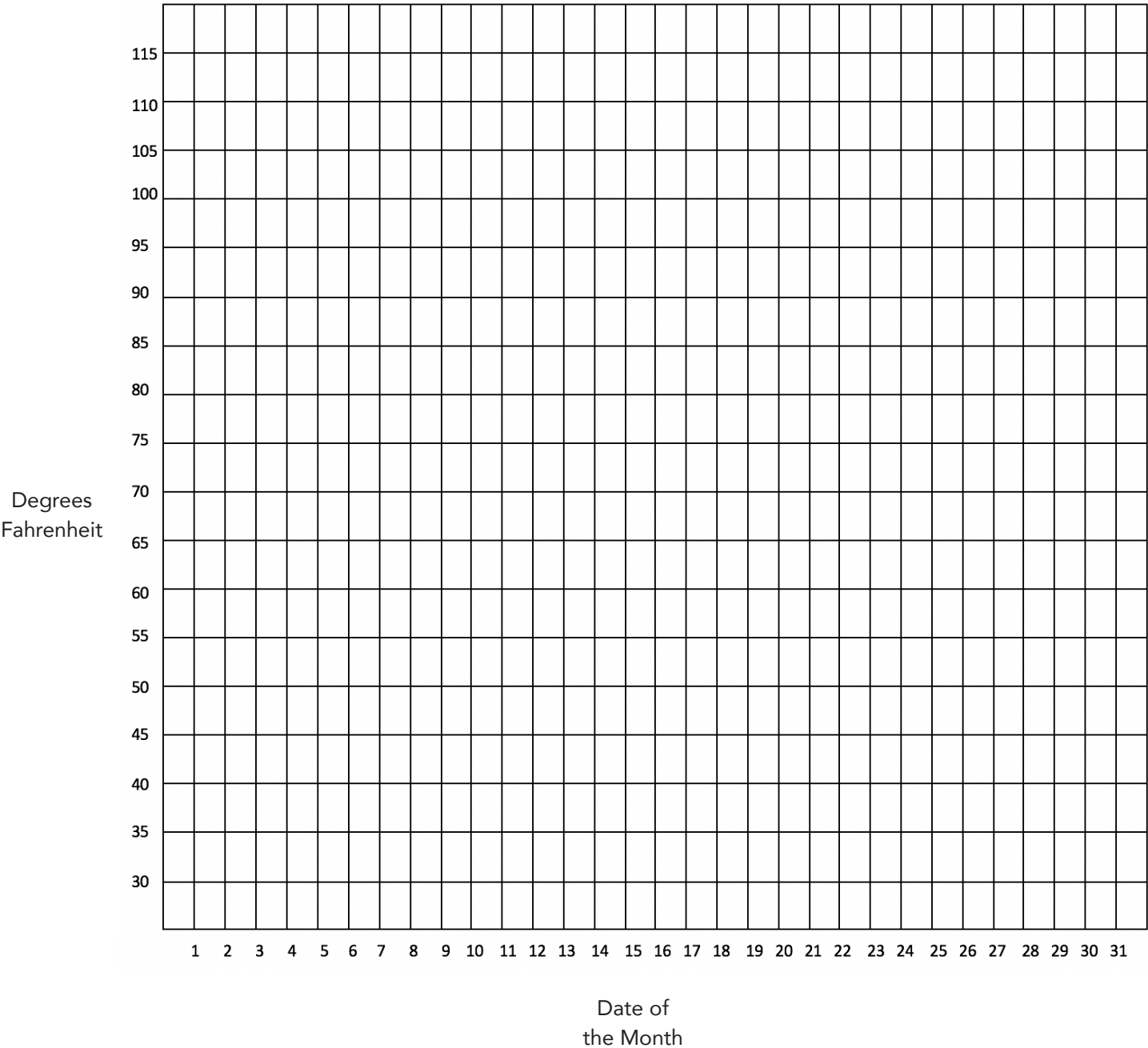


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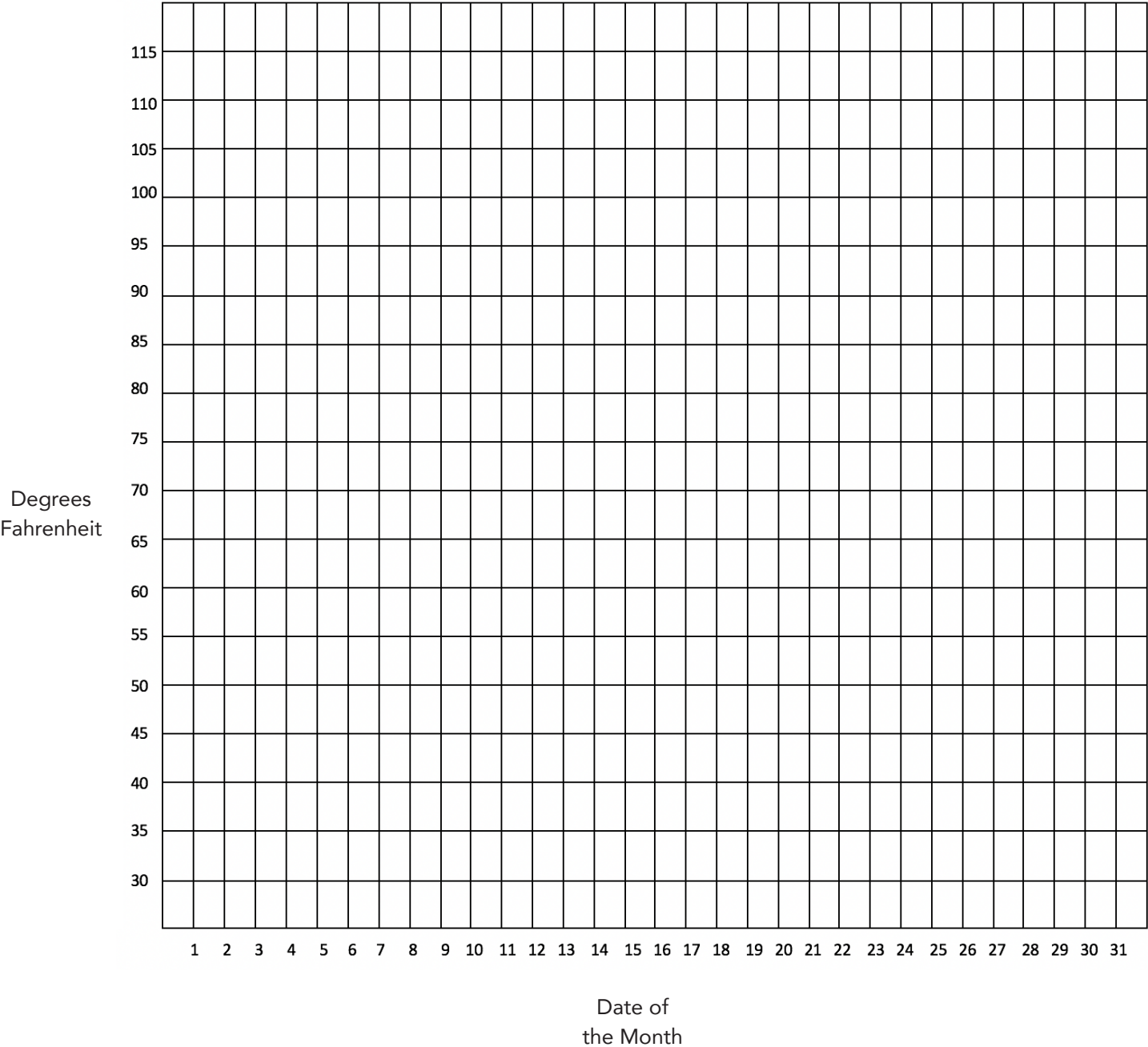


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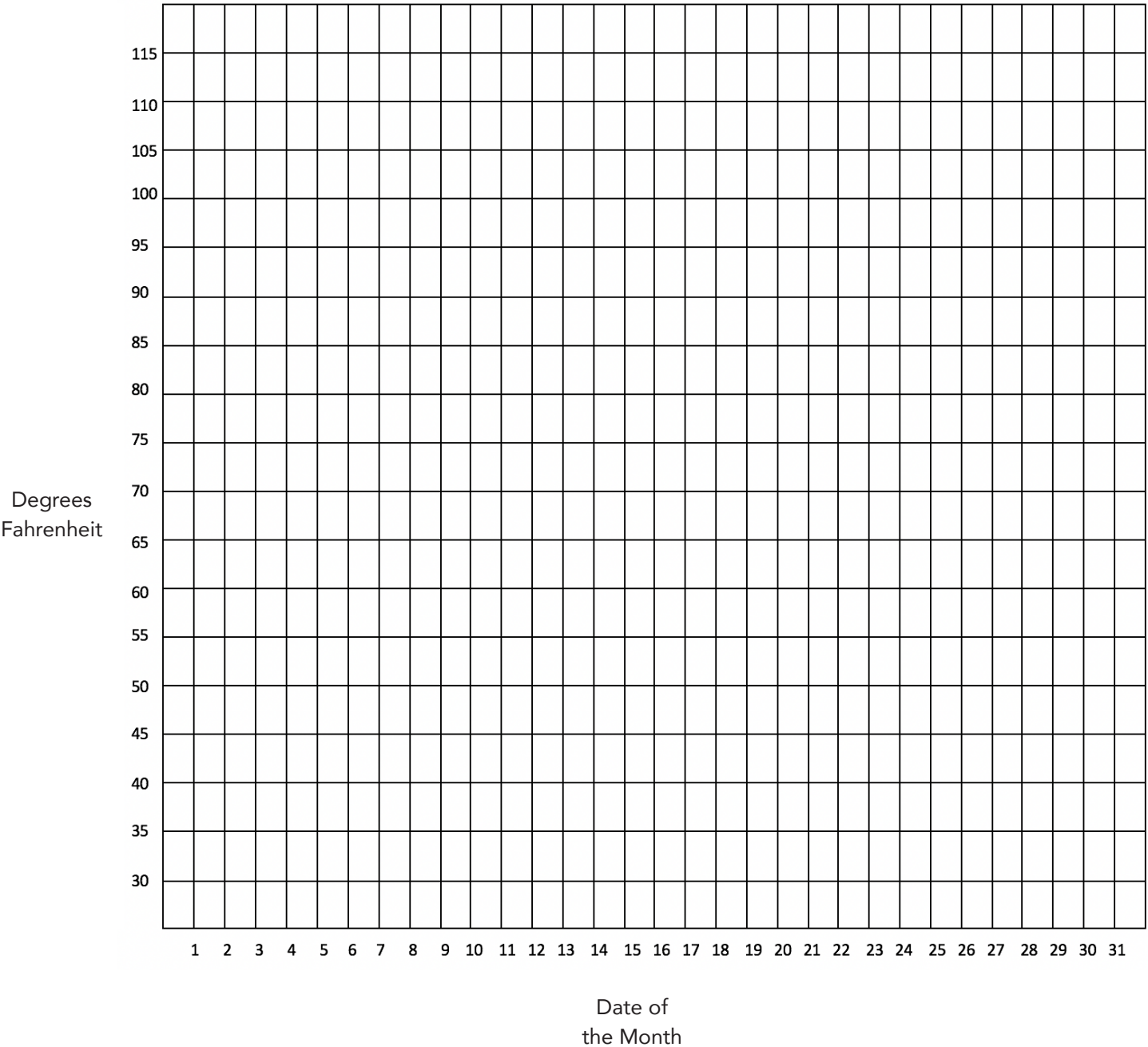


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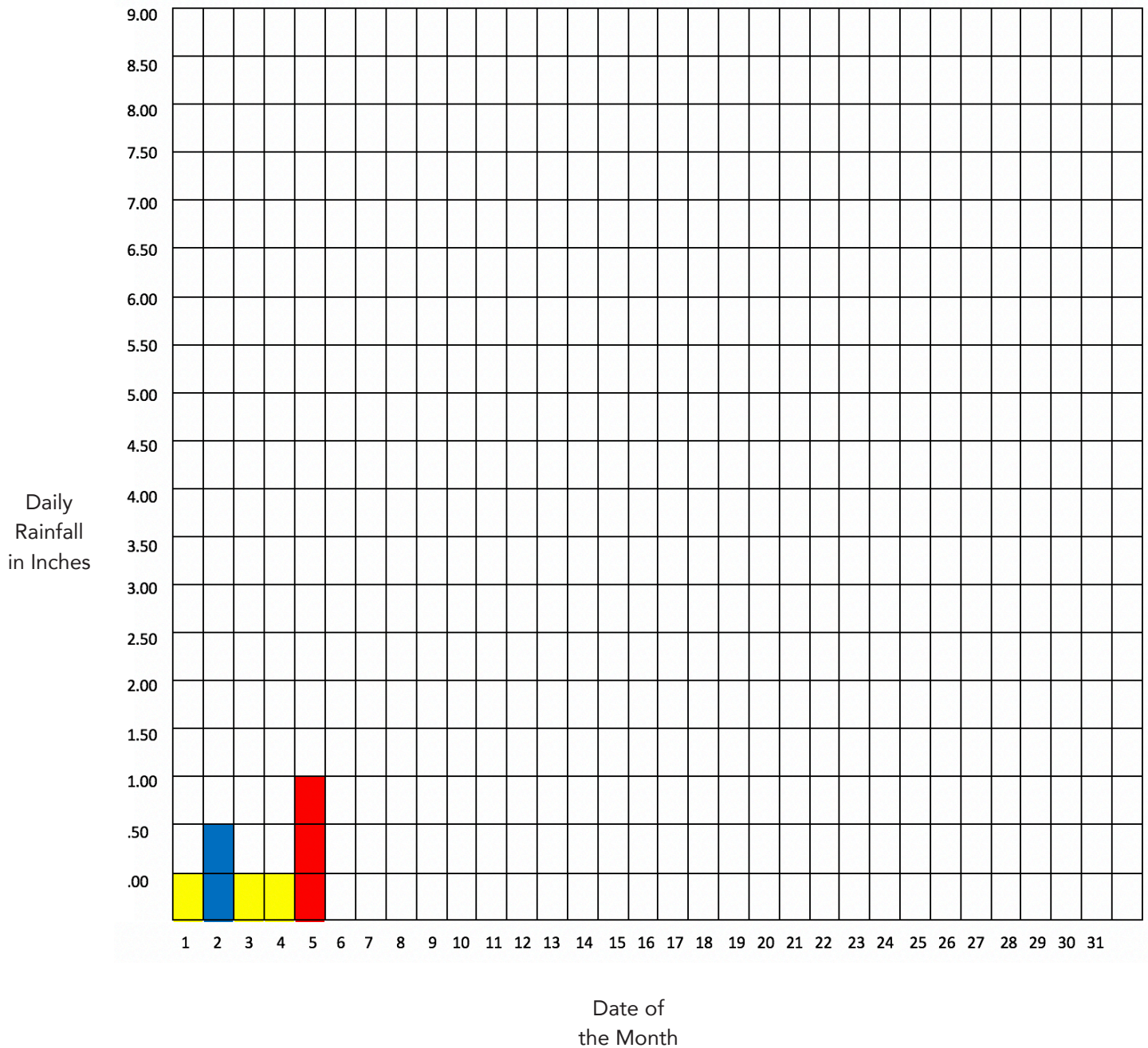


Weather Charts: Precipitation

Using three different colored pencils, create a bar graph as a means to record the natural rainfall/precipitation your garden receives or when you water your garden using a hose or other source.

Example: Red Pencil—Natural Rainfall | Blue Pencil—Other Water Source | Yellow Pencil—No water

Precipitation Chart for the Month of _____.

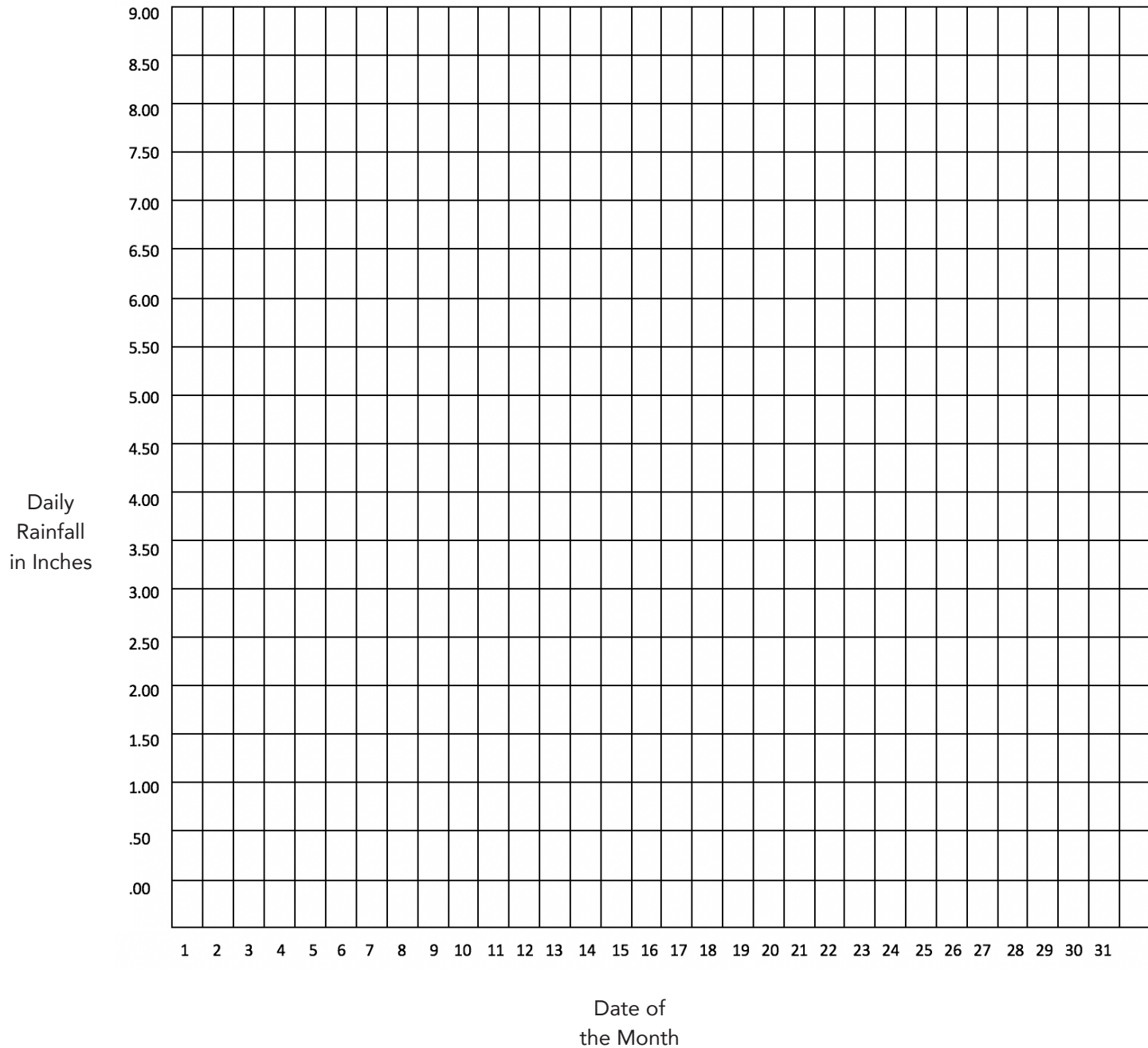


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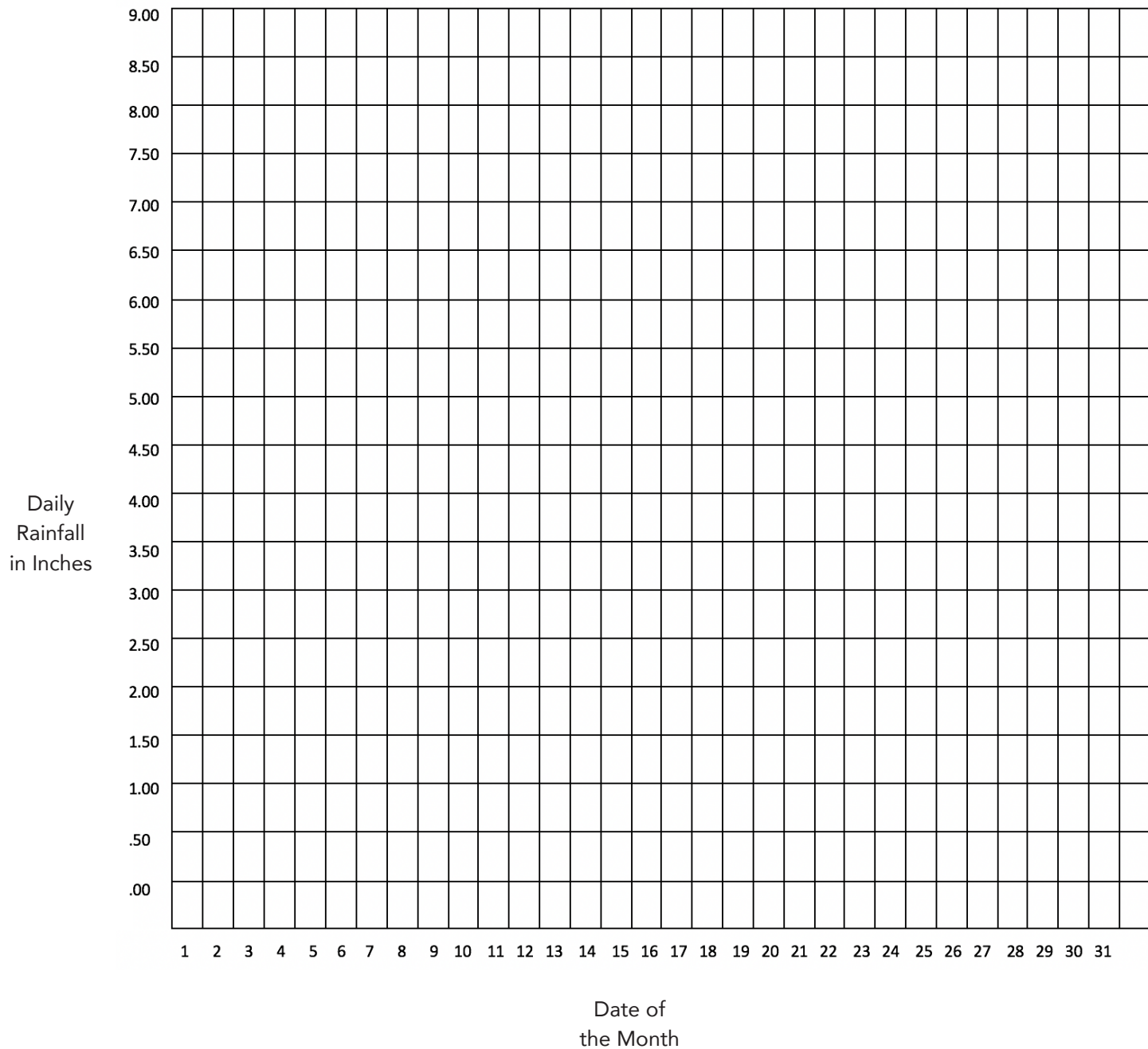


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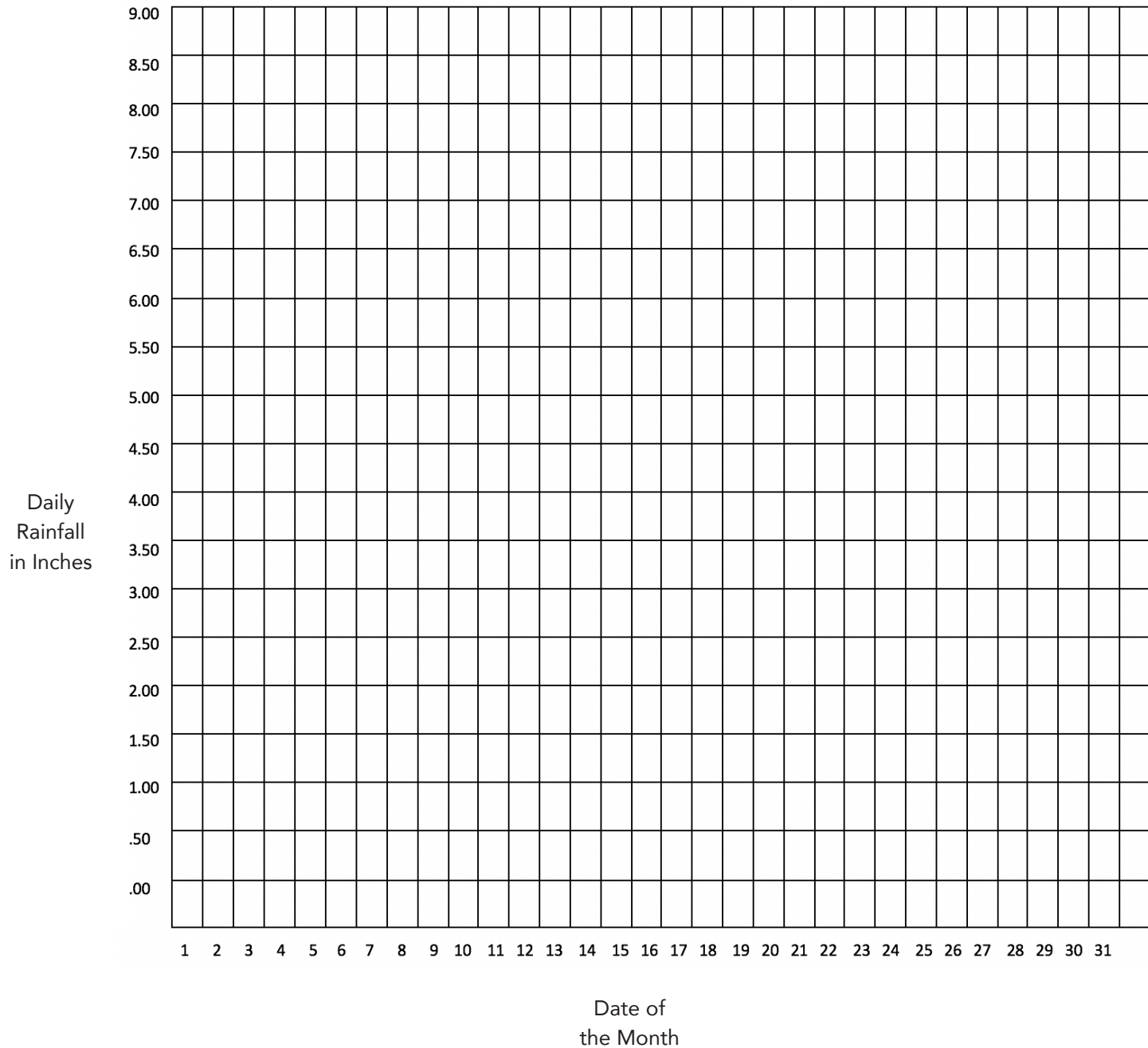


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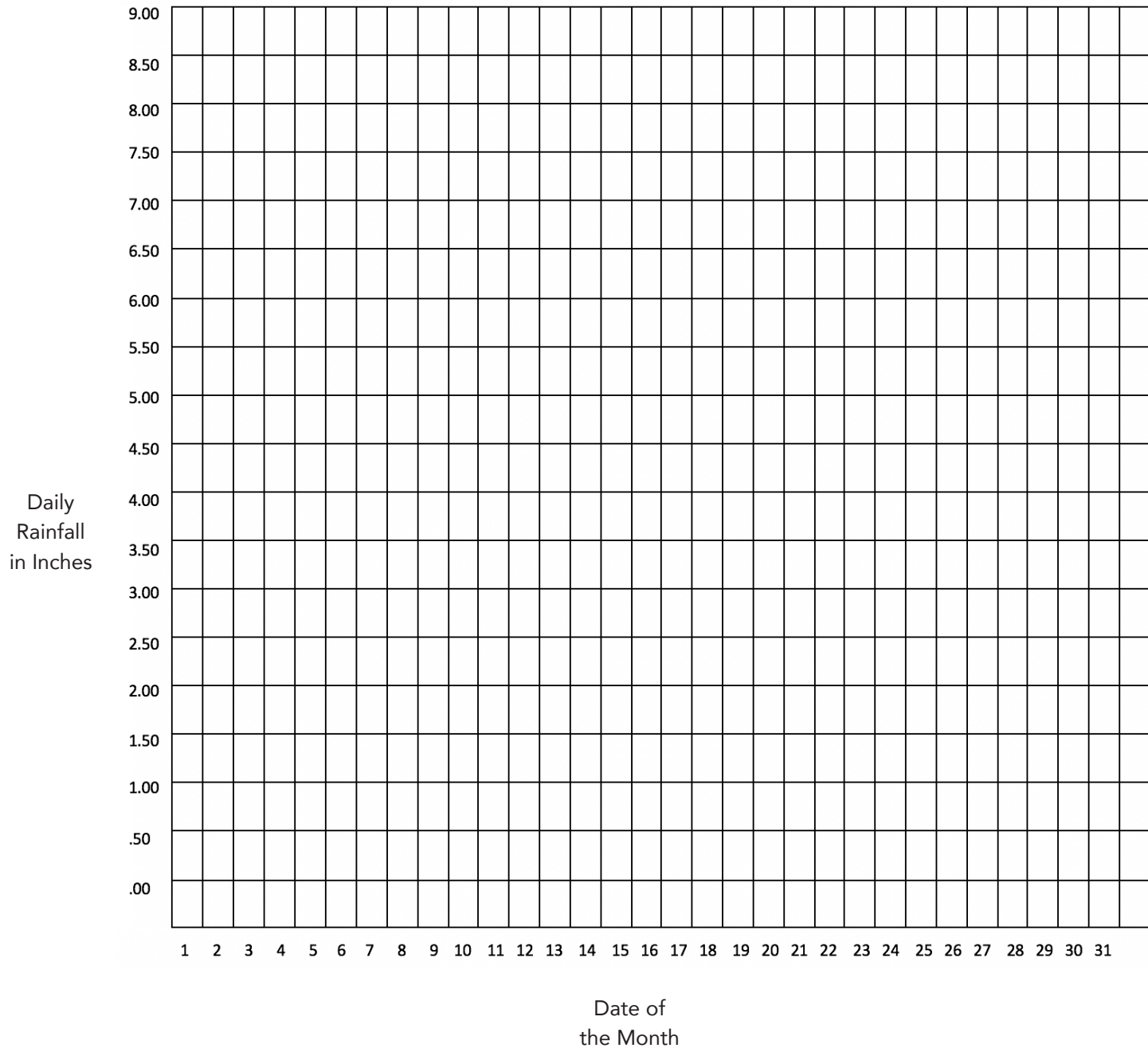


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Harvest Record

Record your harvest below each time you harvest anything from the garden.

Date of Harvest: _____

Time Spent: _____

Type of produce harvested: (Place a check in front of type of produce and provide weight.)

_____ Tomato Weight: _____

_____ Banana Pepper Weight: _____

_____ Bell Pepper Weight: _____

_____ Jalapeño Pepper Weight: _____

_____ Zucchini Weight: _____

_____ Yellow Squash Weight: _____

What are you going to do with this harvest?

When do you think the garden will be ready for another harvest?

Do you have any other comments or observations?

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Total Harvest Record

Refer back to your daily harvest record. Total the number of times you harvested. Then, total the weight and record the data below.

Tomato (Number of times harvested):_____	Total weight harvested:_____
Bell Pepper (Number of times harvested):_____	Total weight harvested: _____
Banana Pepper (Number of times harvested):_____	Total weight harvested: _____
Jalapeño Pepper (Number of times harvested):_____	Total weight harvested: _____
Zucchini (Number of times harvested):_____	Total weight harvested: _____
Yellow Squash (Number of times harvested):_____	Total weight harvested:_____

What was the total weight of the produce that you donated to a local charity?

Looking back through your gardening journal and harvest record, how much time was spent in your garden?

What did you learn from your gardening experience?

