



# Alabama 4-H Grows

Alabama Cooperative Extension System

**Tier III Summer  
Garden Journal**

[www.aces.edu](http://www.aces.edu)



This garden journal is the property of \_\_\_\_\_

## Getting Started

**Step 1:** Register for the 4-H Grows Tier III 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: \_\_\_\_\_

**Step 2:** Since the Tier III project focuses on developing a small produce business, you will want to give it a name. Write the name for your business:

\_\_\_\_\_

**Step 3:** Keeping accurate expense and income records are important. It is also important to record all investments that are not necessarily measured in dollars such as your time, purchase or use of tools, water, and other expenditures so that you get a more accurate cost for doing business. See the section (ledger) in your journal for keeping track of expenses/income starting on page 6.

## Selecting Your Gardening Site

**Step 4:** 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. This type of garden will probably be the most economical type of garden to use for your produce business.

**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 III should be approximately 144 square feet (three 4'x10' beds) (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 III garden project (summer) will provide a larger and broader gardening experience for participants. The summer project may include, but is not limited to, tomatoes (6), cherry tomatoes (5), bell peppers (6), banana peppers or other types of peppers (6 of your choice), packet of yellow squash and zucchini seeds, or comparable plants and seeds. Plant selection, and the number and variety of plants are up to the participant with approval by their county 4-H representative. For example, the participant could choose to only grow tomatoes in a quantity (24 plants) large enough to insure having enough produce for market.

- Date site selected: \_\_\_\_\_

**Step 5:** 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](http://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](http://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.

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

#### 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 6:** 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 7:** 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: \_\_\_\_\_

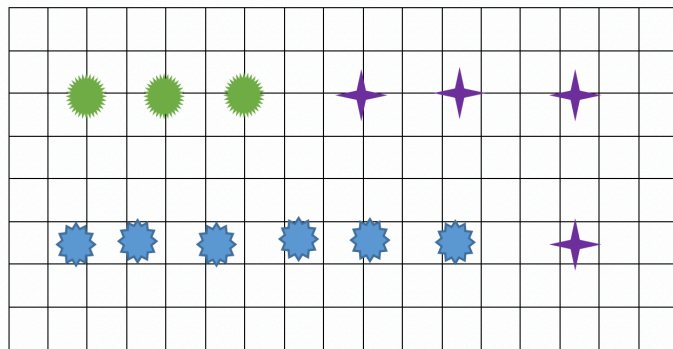


Figure 1. Traditional garden design (1'x1' scale).

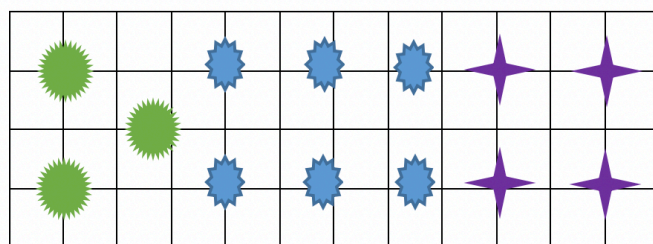
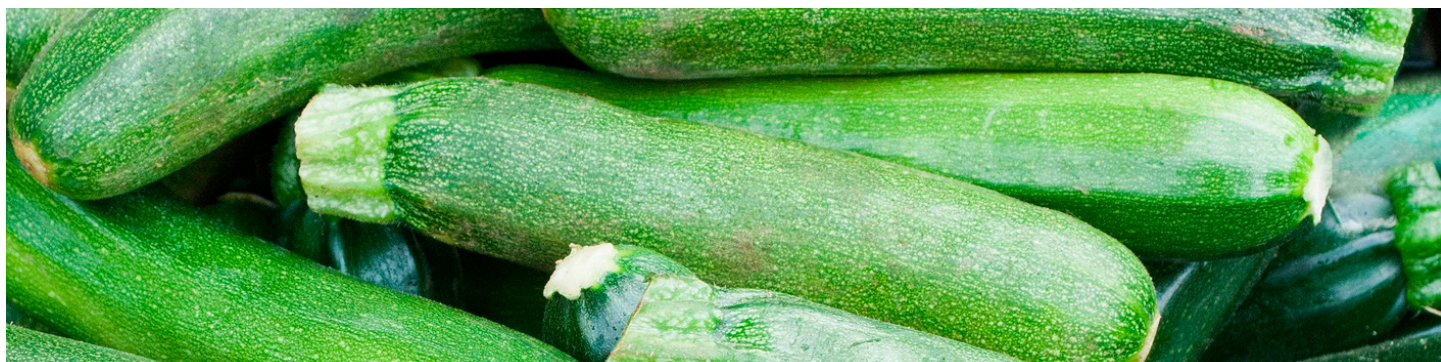


Figure 2. Raised bed garden design (4'x12' garden).

### Garden Key

- Tomato
- ★ Peppers
- ★ Zucchini & Squash





## Planting Your Garden

**Step 8:** 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 9:** Make an entry in the gardening journal at least once a week or more depending on your interaction 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. If you need to add additional pages of daily journal page, we have placed a copy of just this page on the website at <https://www.aces.edu/blog/topics/4h/alabama-4-h-grows/>.

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.

## Keeping Accurate Expense and Income Records

**Step 10:** Use pages 6 and 7 to keep track of all expenses and income throughout the length of this project. At the conclusion of this project, this information will help you understand whether your business was profitable.

for \_\_\_\_\_

(Insert Name of Business)

If you have any receipts for items purchased, please save them for your records.

[illegible]

## Income and Expense Report continued

If you have any receipts for items purchased, please save them for your records.

[illegible]



## 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.

[illegible]

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

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**Comments/observations:**

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## 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.

List today's expenses, income, and hours. Also include this under Step 10 in the Expense and Income Record starting on page 6.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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.

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Date of Observation \_\_\_\_\_

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If soil is lacking moisture, make sure you water the garden. Any garden problems?  
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- ☐ 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.

If soil is lacking moisture, make sure you water the garden. Any garden problems?

List today's expenses, income, and hours. Also include this under Step 10 in the Expense and Income Record starting on page 6.

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Use the area below to record observations of your garden. Take a photo and attach it to this page.

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## Garden Journal

Date of Observation \_\_\_\_\_

Time Spent in the Garden \_\_\_\_\_

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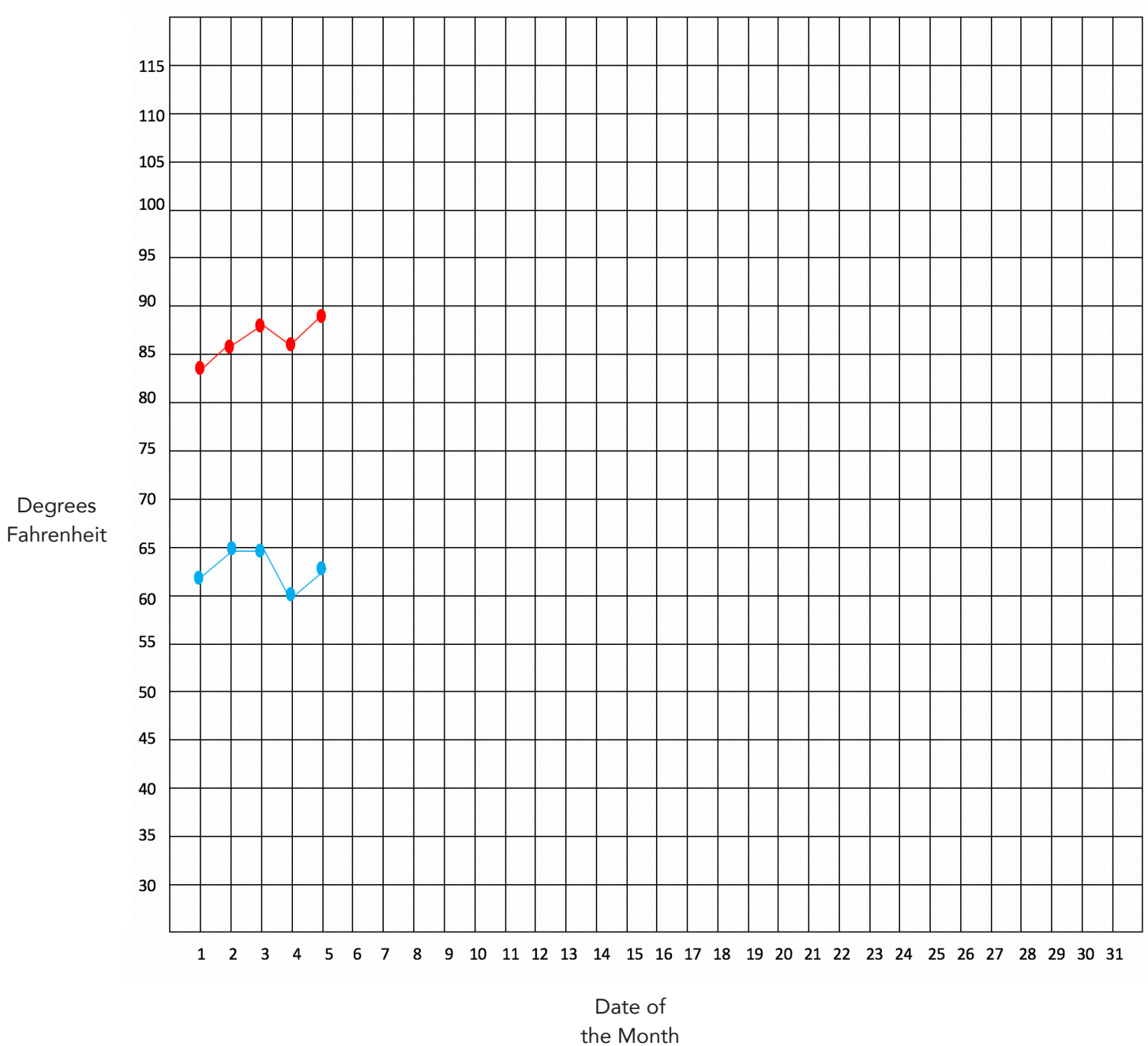
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## Weather Charts: Temperature

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 \_\_\_\_\_.

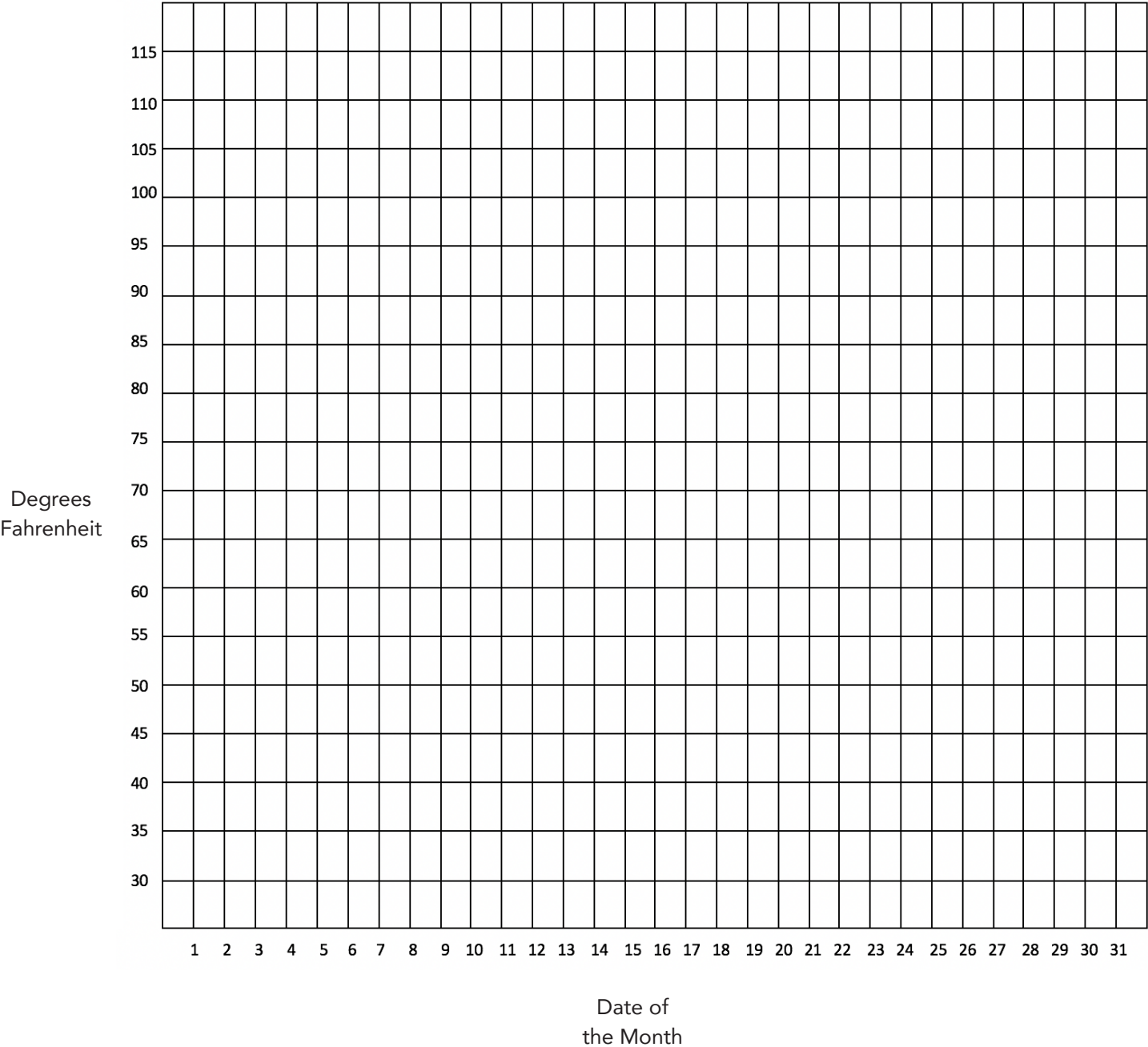


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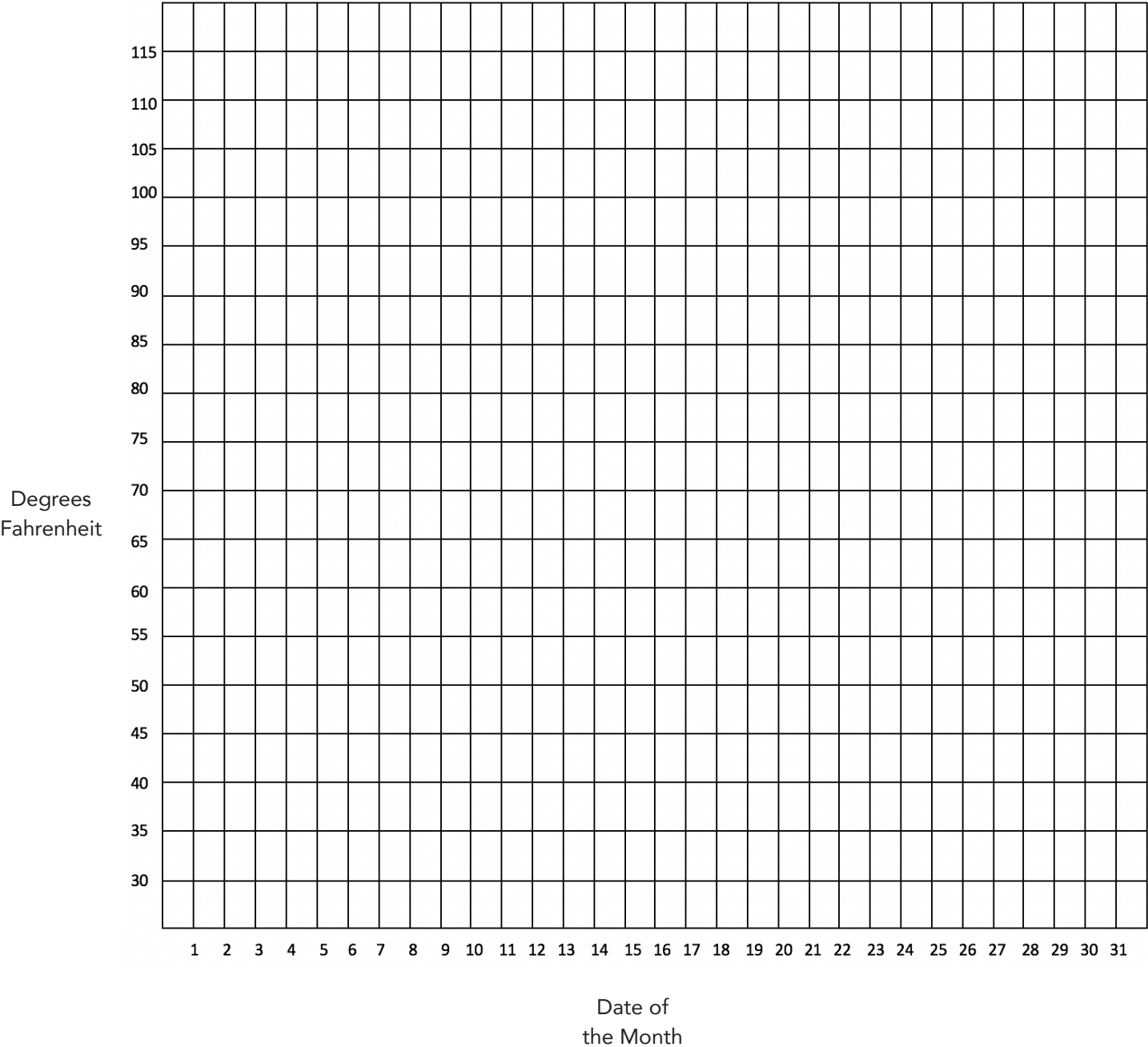


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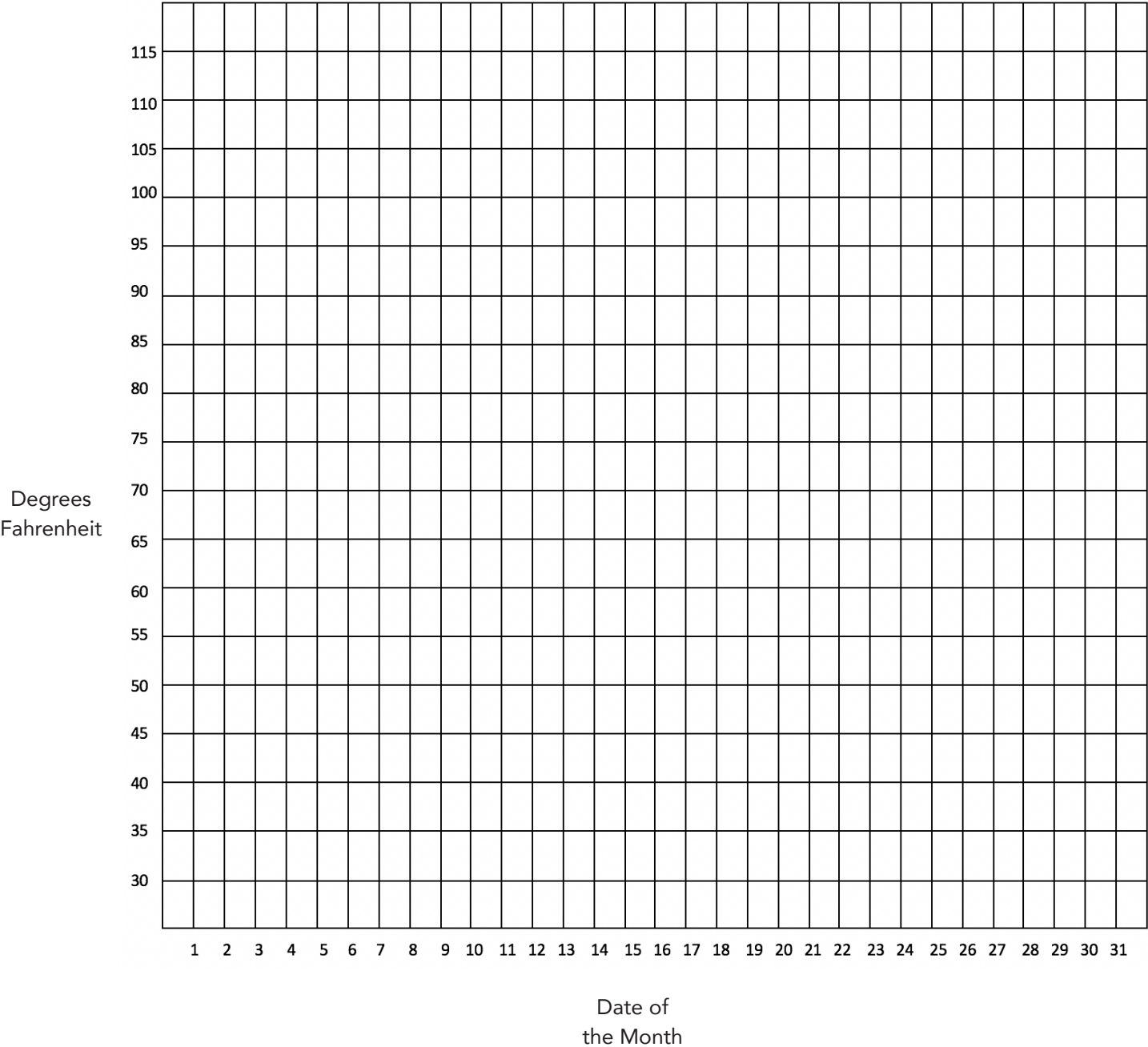


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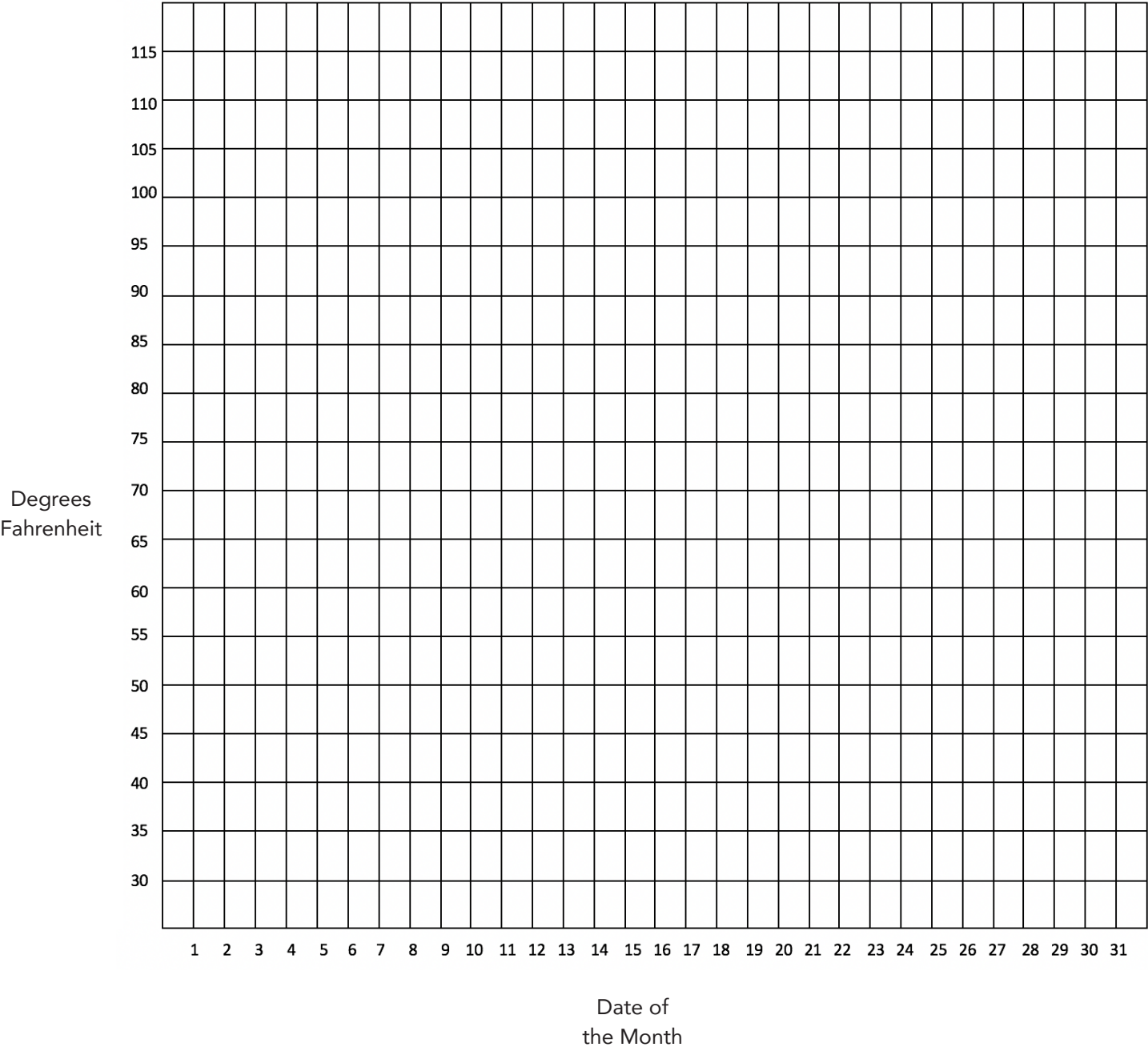


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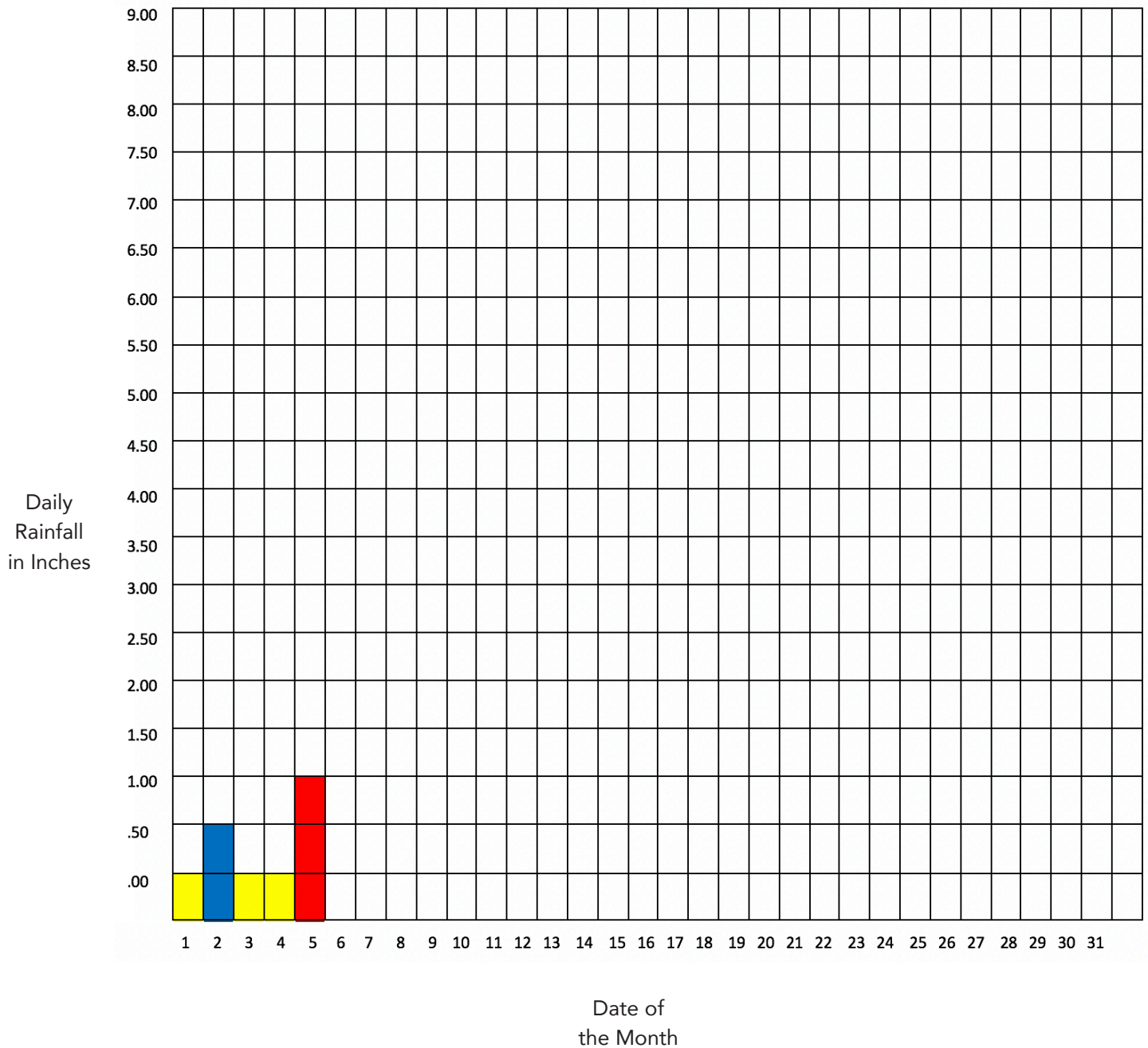


## Weather Charts: Precipitation

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 \_\_\_\_\_.**

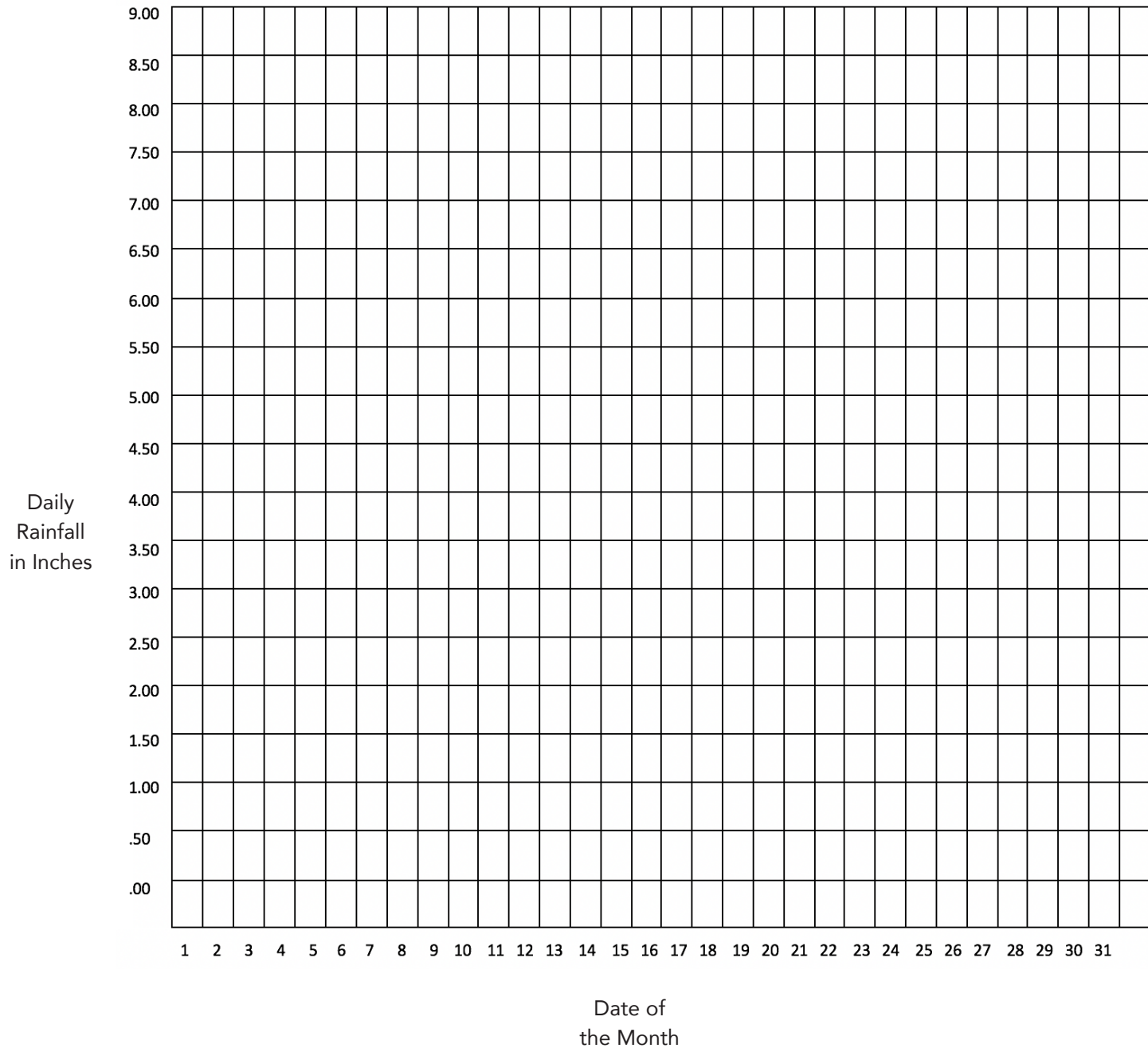


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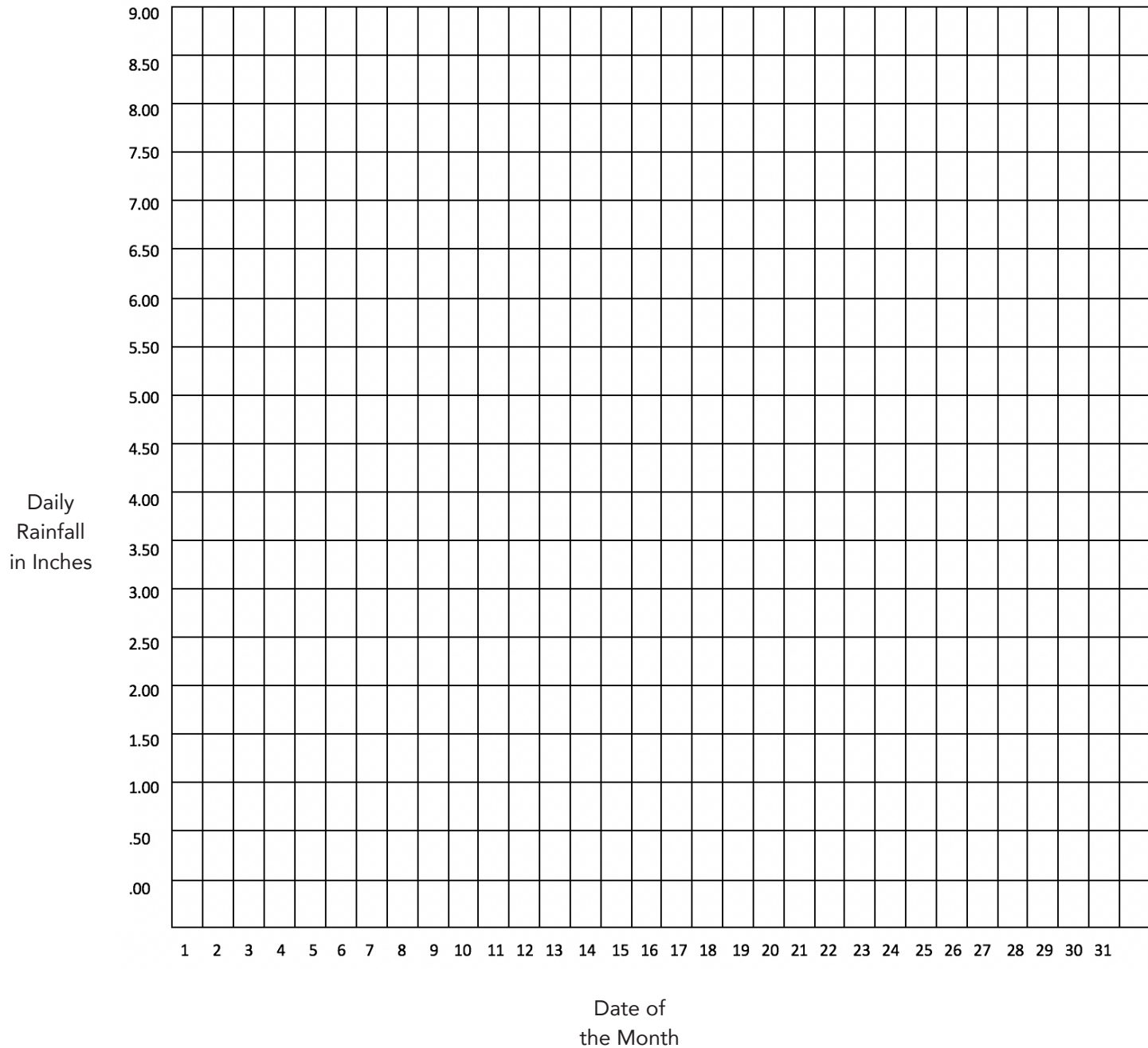


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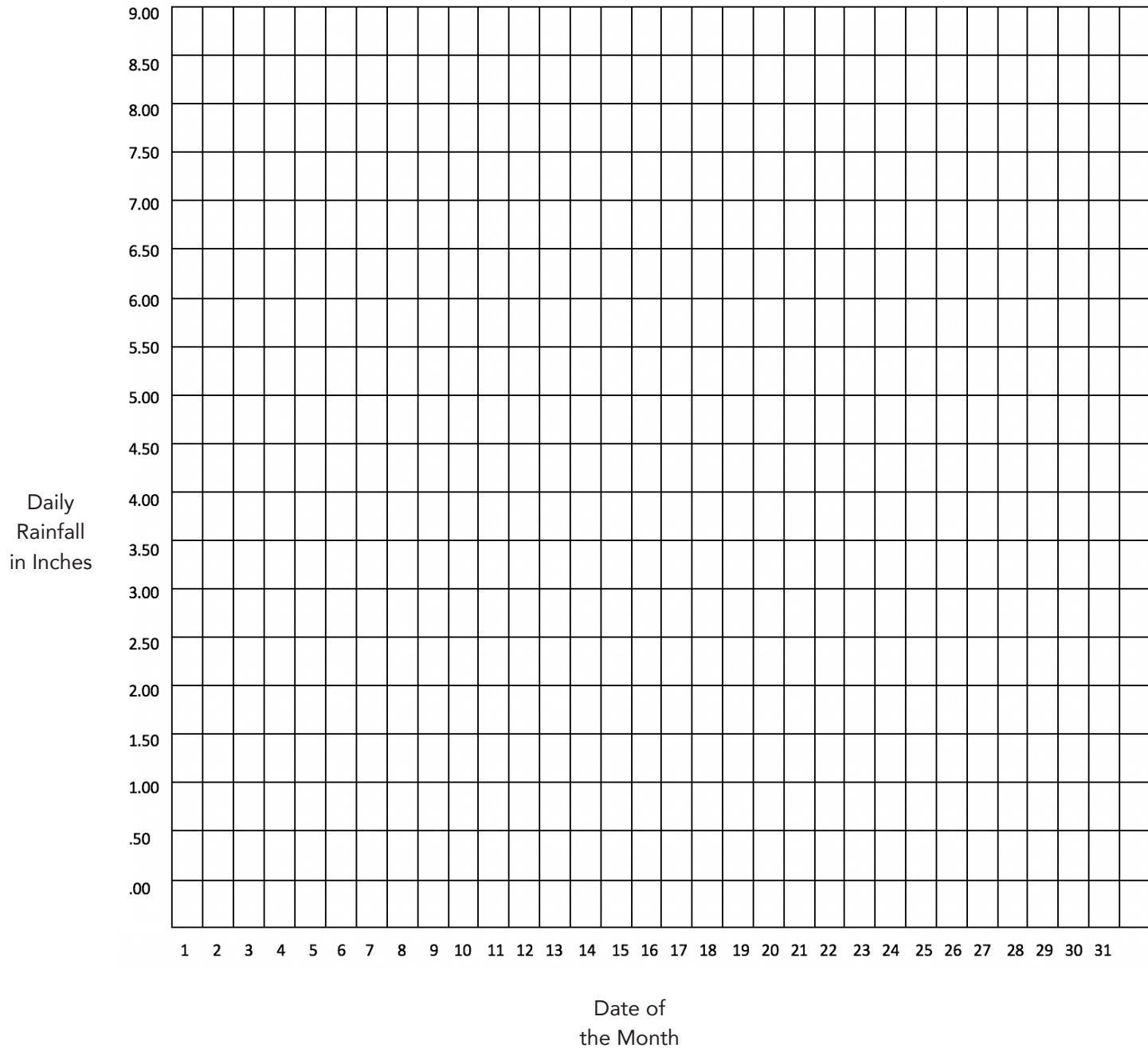


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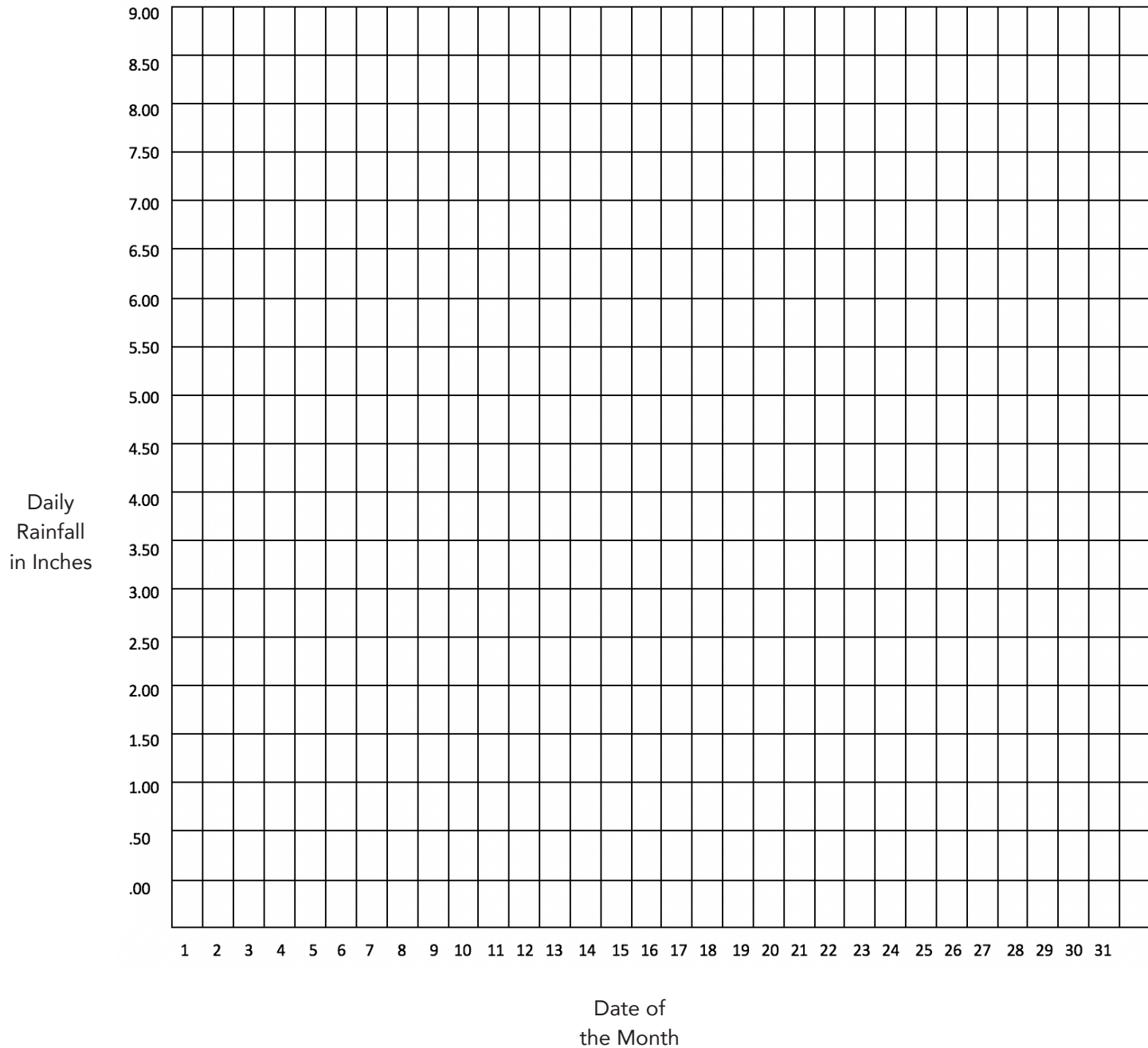


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Precipitation Chart for the Month of \_\_\_\_\_.





# Harvest Record

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

Date of Harvest: \_\_\_\_\_

Time Spent: \_\_\_\_\_

Write the name of the produce you are harvesting in the blank space. Then record the weight and income from each of the vegetables that you harvested and sold. Also record your income and expenses on page 6.

_____	Weight: _____	Income: _____	_____	Weight: _____	Income: _____
_____	Weight: _____	Income: _____	_____	Weight: _____	Income: _____
_____	Weight: _____	Income: _____	_____	Weight: _____	Income: _____
_____	Weight: _____	Income: _____	_____	Weight: _____	Income: _____

**Where are you going to sell your produce? For example, to neighbors or at a farmers market.**

\_\_\_\_\_

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

\_\_\_\_\_

**Do you have any other comments or observations?**

\_\_\_\_\_

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

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## Total Harvest and Income/Expense Record

Write the names of the different produce you harvested on the blank along the left side of the box below. Then list the number of times you harvested as well as the total weight and income from each crop.

_____ (Number of times harvested): _____	Total weight: _____	Total Income: _____
_____ (Number of times harvested): _____	Total weight: _____	Total Income: _____
_____ (Number of times harvested): _____	Total weight: _____	Total Income: _____
_____ (Number of times harvested): _____	Total weight: _____	Total Income: _____
_____ (Number of times harvested): _____	Total weight: _____	Total Income: _____
_____ (Number of times harvested): _____	Total weight: _____	Total Income: _____
_____ (Number of times harvested): _____	Total weight: _____	Total Income: _____

What was the total weight of the produce that you harvested and sold? \_\_\_\_\_

What was your total income? \_\_\_\_\_

What was your total expenses? \_\_\_\_\_

How many hours did you spend working with your produce business, and what was the value of these hours using the minimum wage rate of \$7.25 per hour? \_\_\_\_\_

What did you learn from your gardening/business experience?

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