Alabama 4-H Grows

Alabama Cooperative Extension System

Tier IV Summer Garden Journal

GROW MORE GIVE MORE
ALABAMA EXTENSION

Bonnie PLANTS

www.aces.edu

This garden journal is the property of _____

Getting Started

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

- Date completed: _____

Step 2: The Tier IV project focuses on growing produce and giving back to the community by donating at least 50 percent of your produce to a local food bank or other public or private nonprofit that helps those in the community who are less fortunate. This 4-H Project supports the Alabama Extension **Grow More, Give More** initiative. Participants will receive a Grow More, Give More yard sign. By signing on this line, I commit to the above goal.

_____

Step 3: Keeping accurate production and donation records along with expense records is 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 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," on the Alabama Extension website at www.aces.edu..

The garden area for tier IV is up to the discretion of the participant in the project. It is recommended that participants have a minimum garden that contains at least 40 sq. ft. (4 x 10 garden).

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 number and variety of plants that are grown in your summer garden are up to the participant with the approval of their county 4-H representative. A lot of garden plants can be grown successfully in a summer garden. The following is a list of some of the more popular plants that grow well in Alabama: tomato, various peppers, eggplant, yellow squash and zucchini as well as many others. For example, the participant could choose to only grow peppers in a quantity large enough to ensure having enough produce to donate.

- Date site and garden plants are 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 the Alabama Extension website at

www.aces.edu 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 on the Alabama Extension website, 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 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: _____

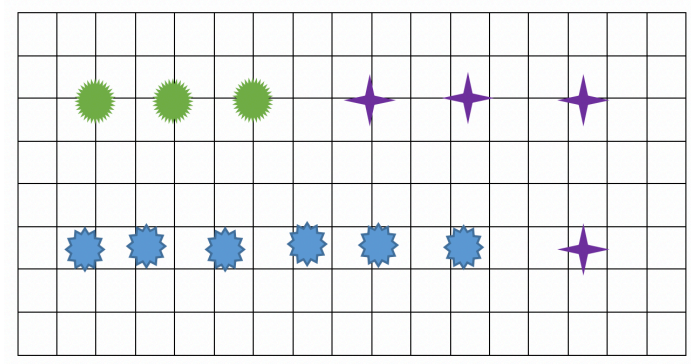


Figure 1. Traditional garden design (1'x1' scale).

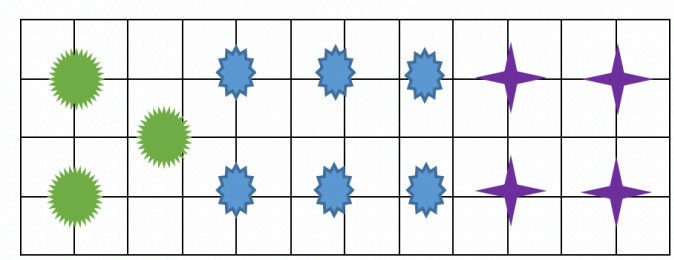


Figure 2. Raised bed garden design (4'x12' garden).

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. If you decide to plant seeds, follow the instructions on the back of the seed packet.

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 a 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, such as with cabbage, while multiple harvests may be possible with the other fall plants.)

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 Records

Step 10: Use pages 6 and 7 to keep track of all expenses throughout the length of this project. At the conclusion of the project, this information will help you better understand the total impact of your donation of produce.

Expense Report

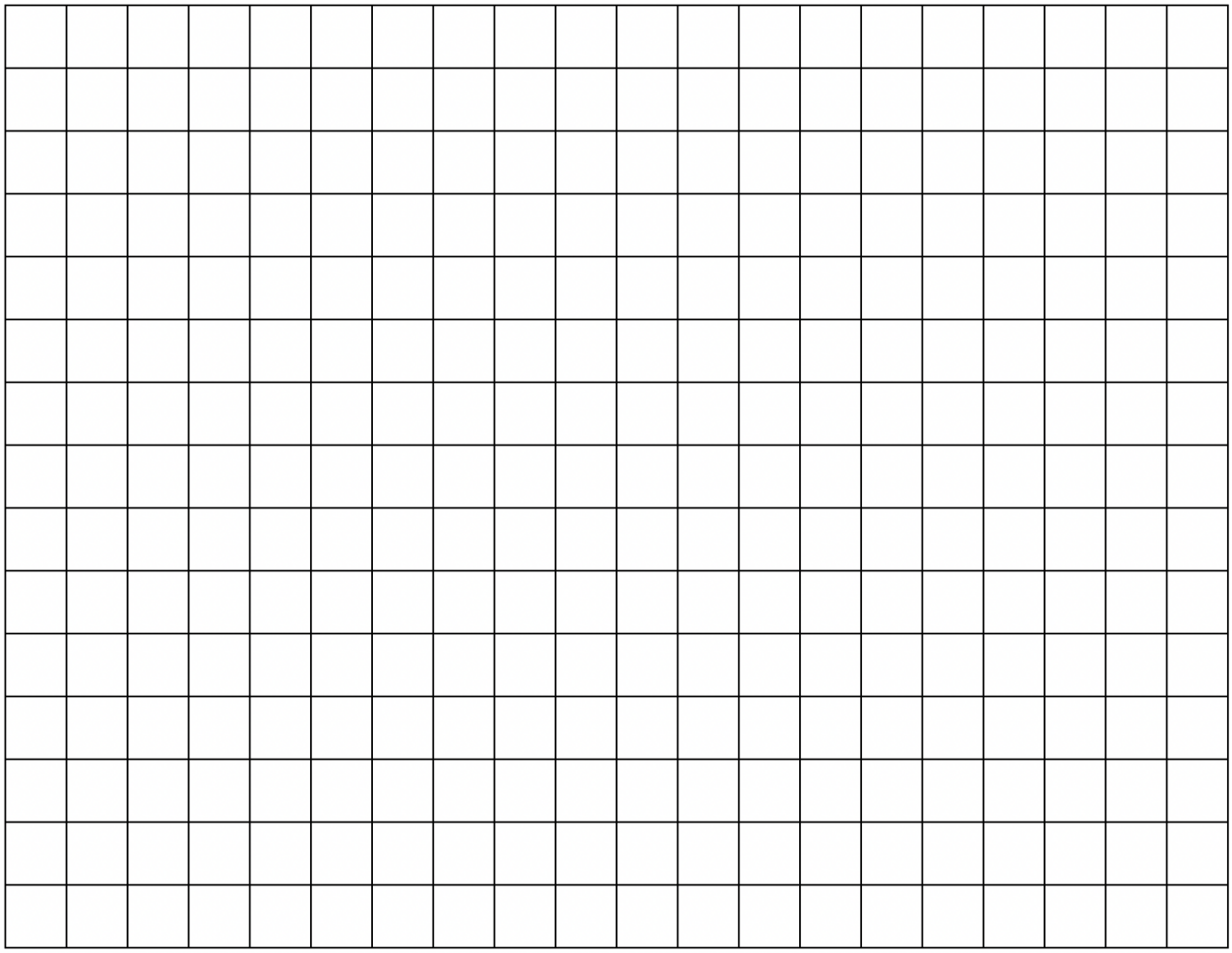
If you have any receipts for items purchased, please save them for your records.

Date	Description	Expense	Extended Expenses	Hours Worked
	Subtotal for each column			

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.



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.

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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 and hours. Also include this under Step 10 in the Expense Record starting on page 6.

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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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Garden Journal

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Date of Observation

_____
Time Spent in the Garden

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

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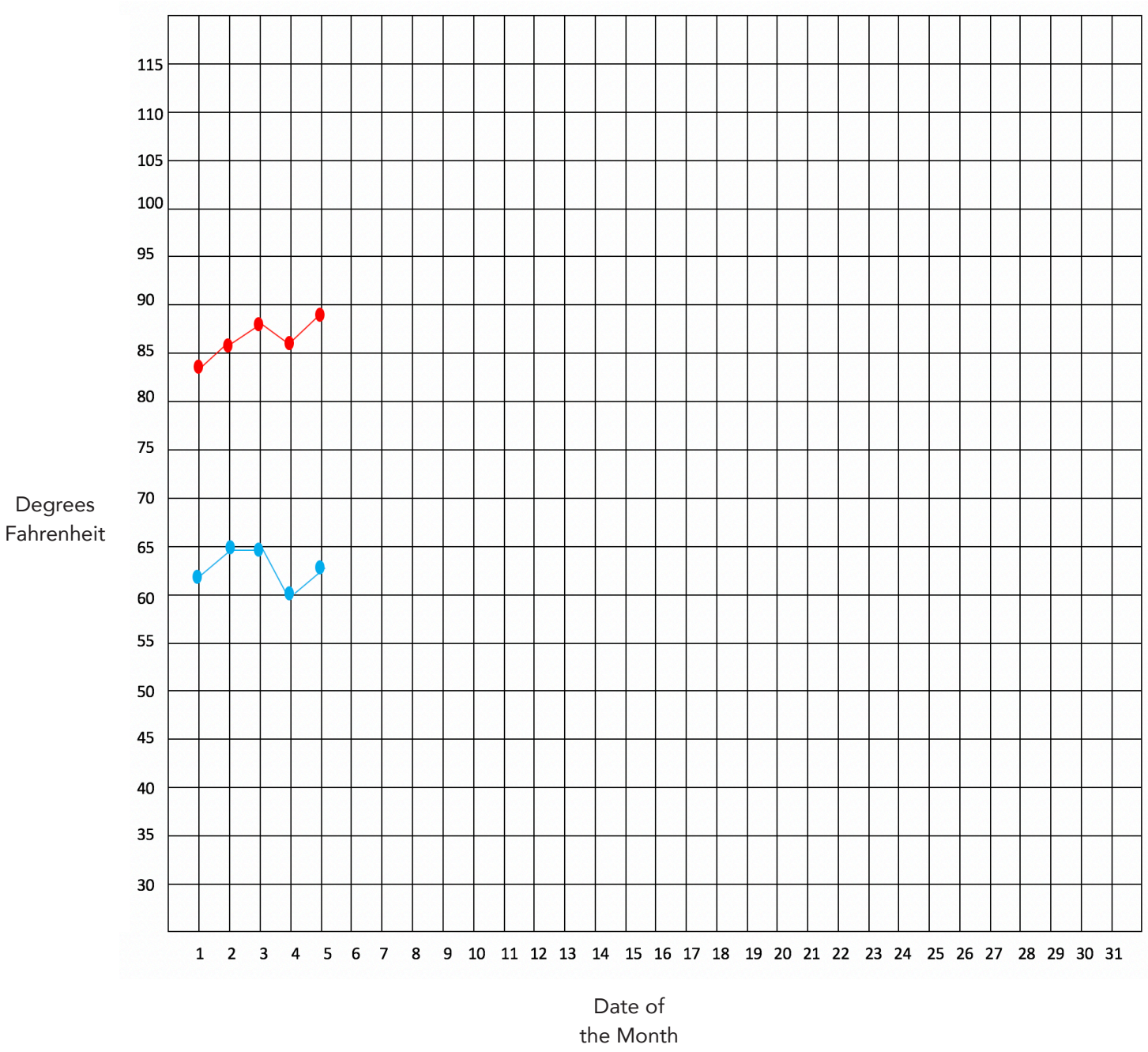
Weather Charts: Temperature

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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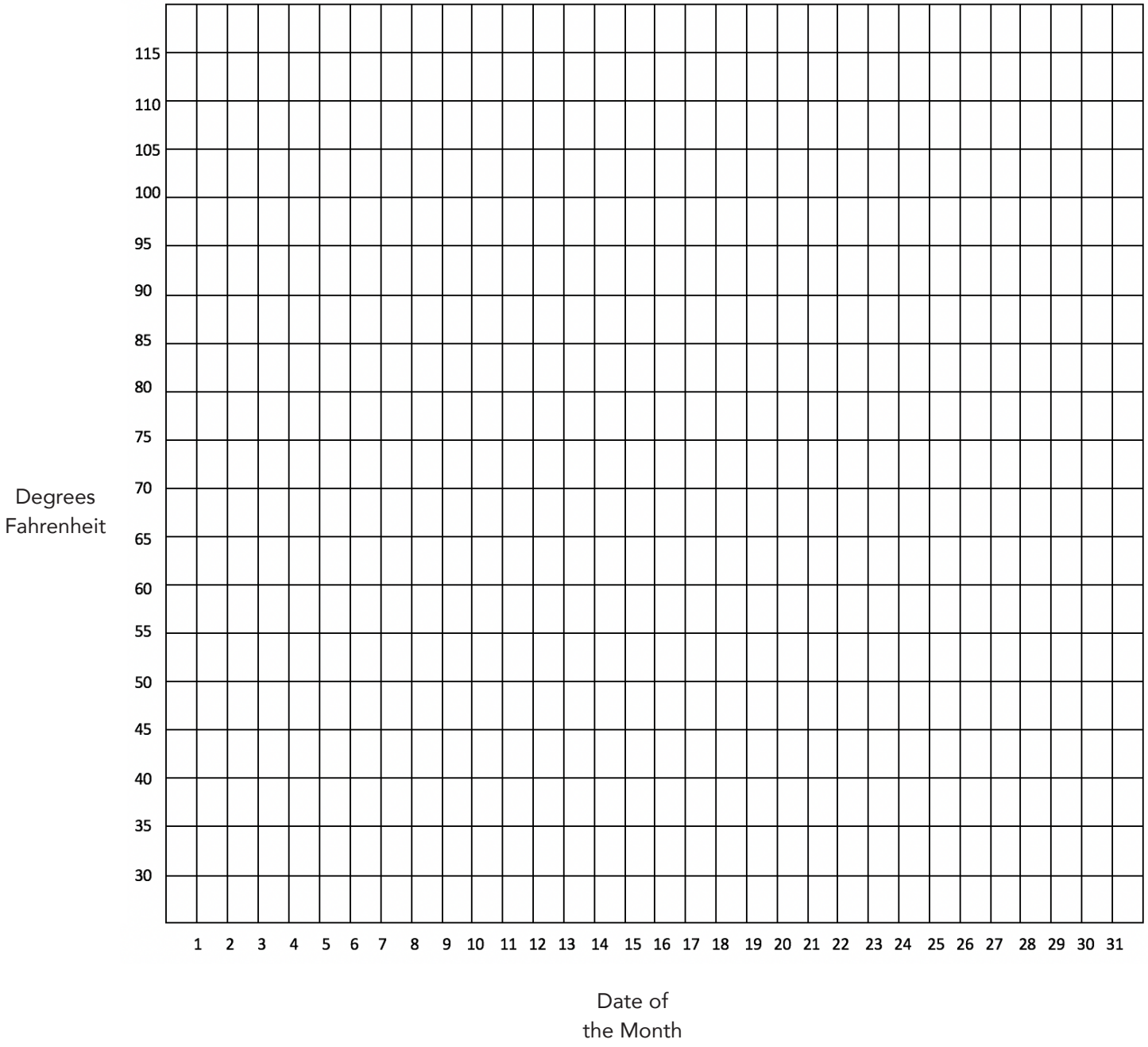
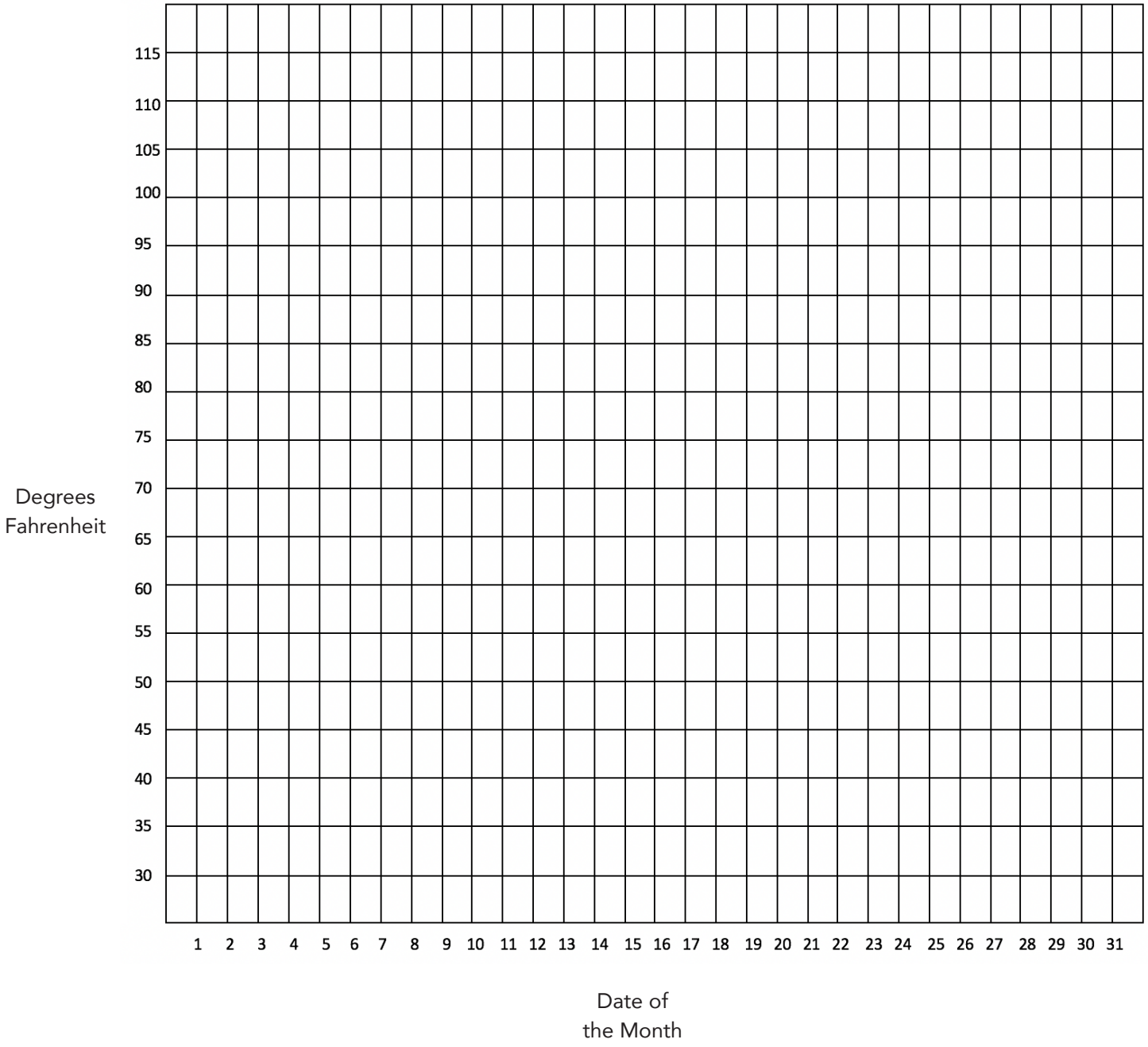


Weather Charts: Temperature

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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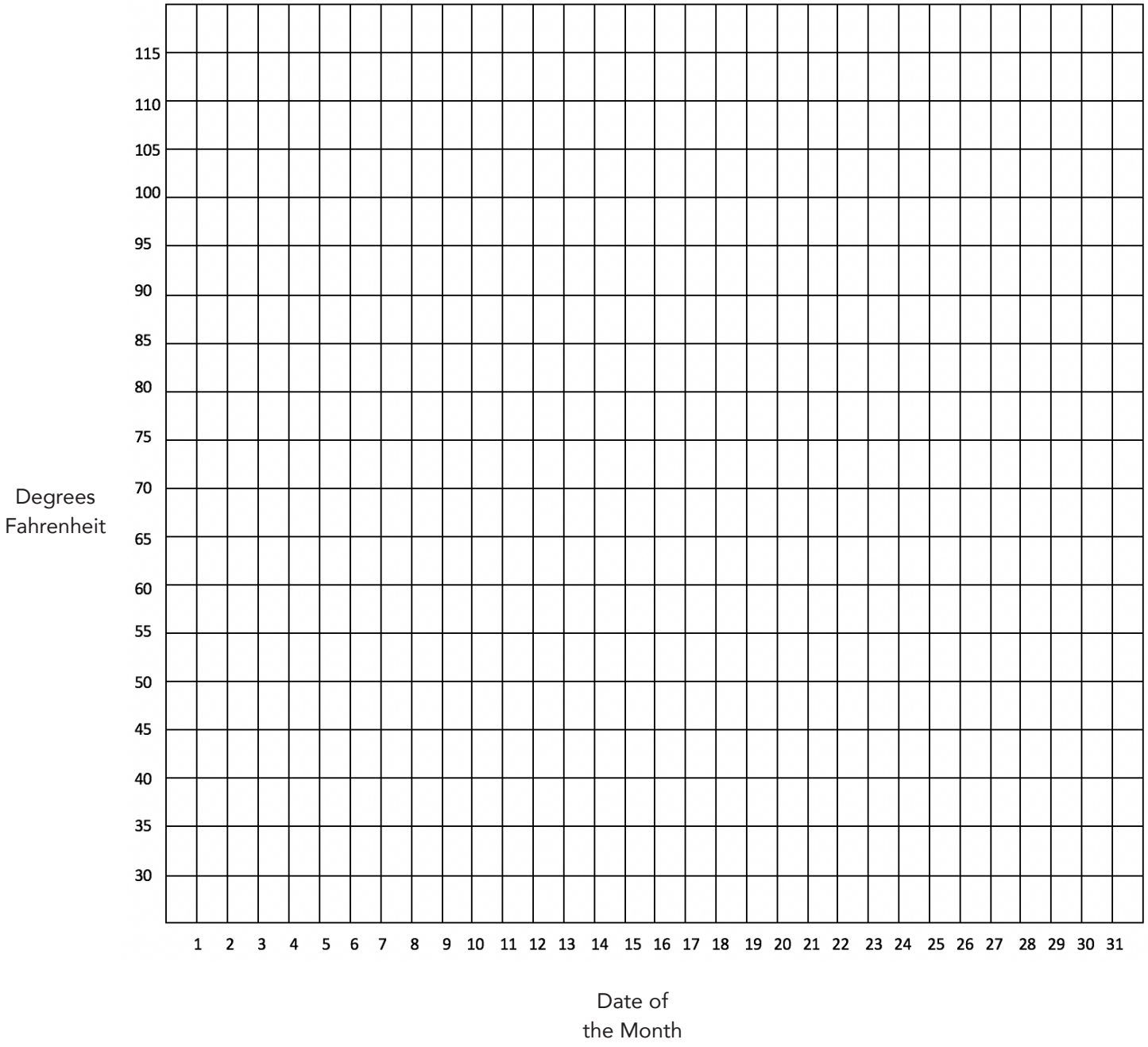

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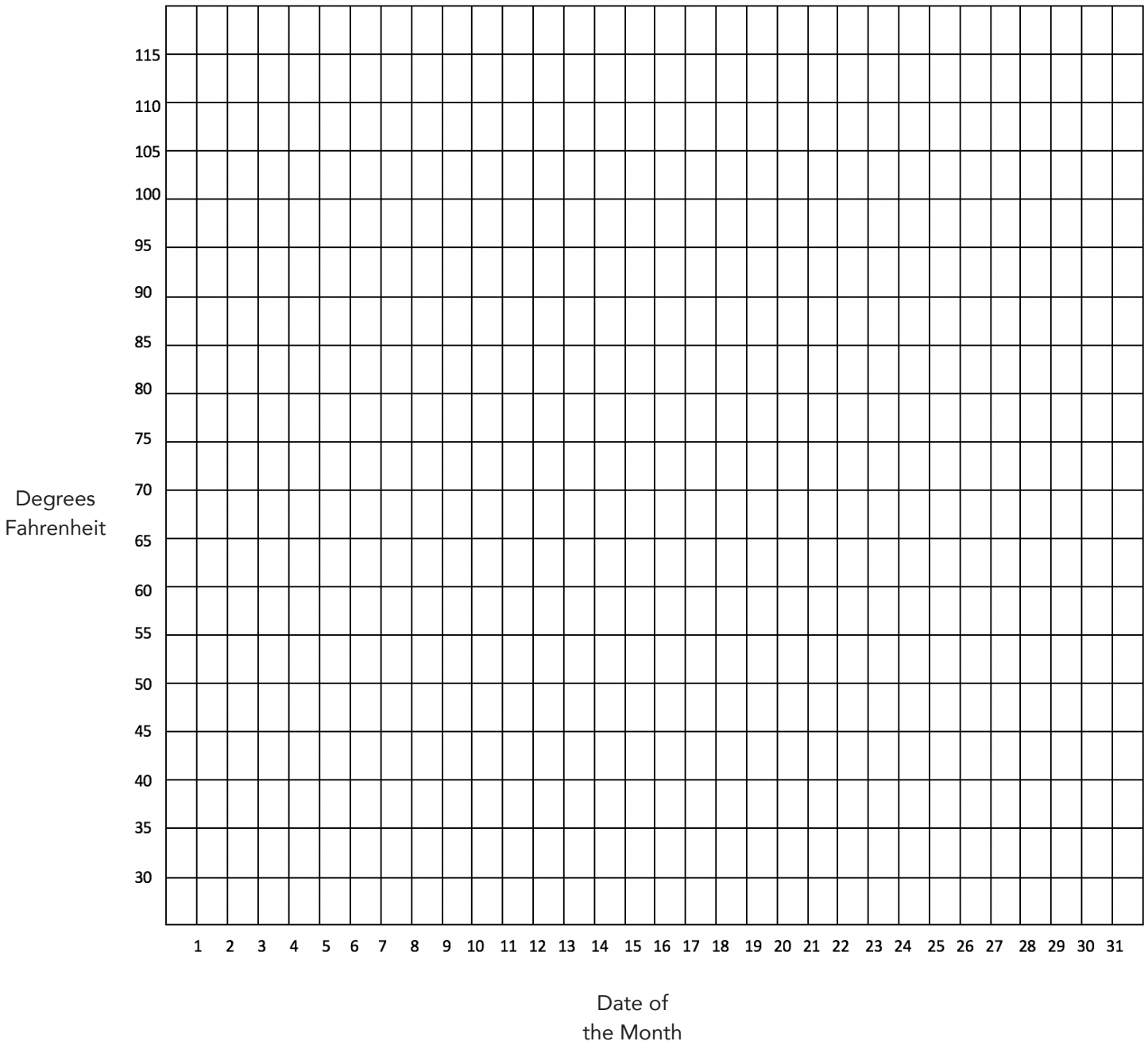
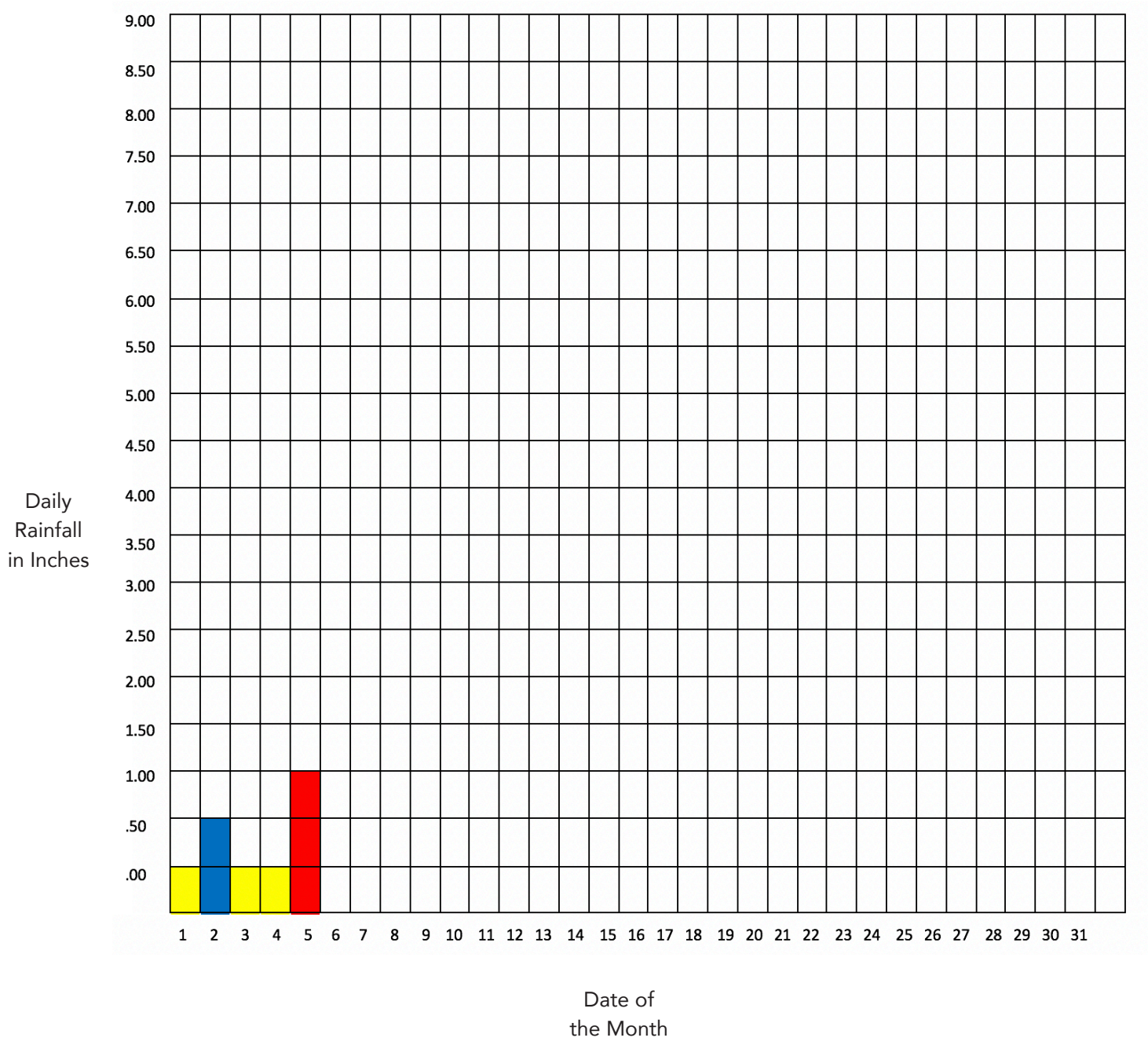


Weather Charts: Precipitation

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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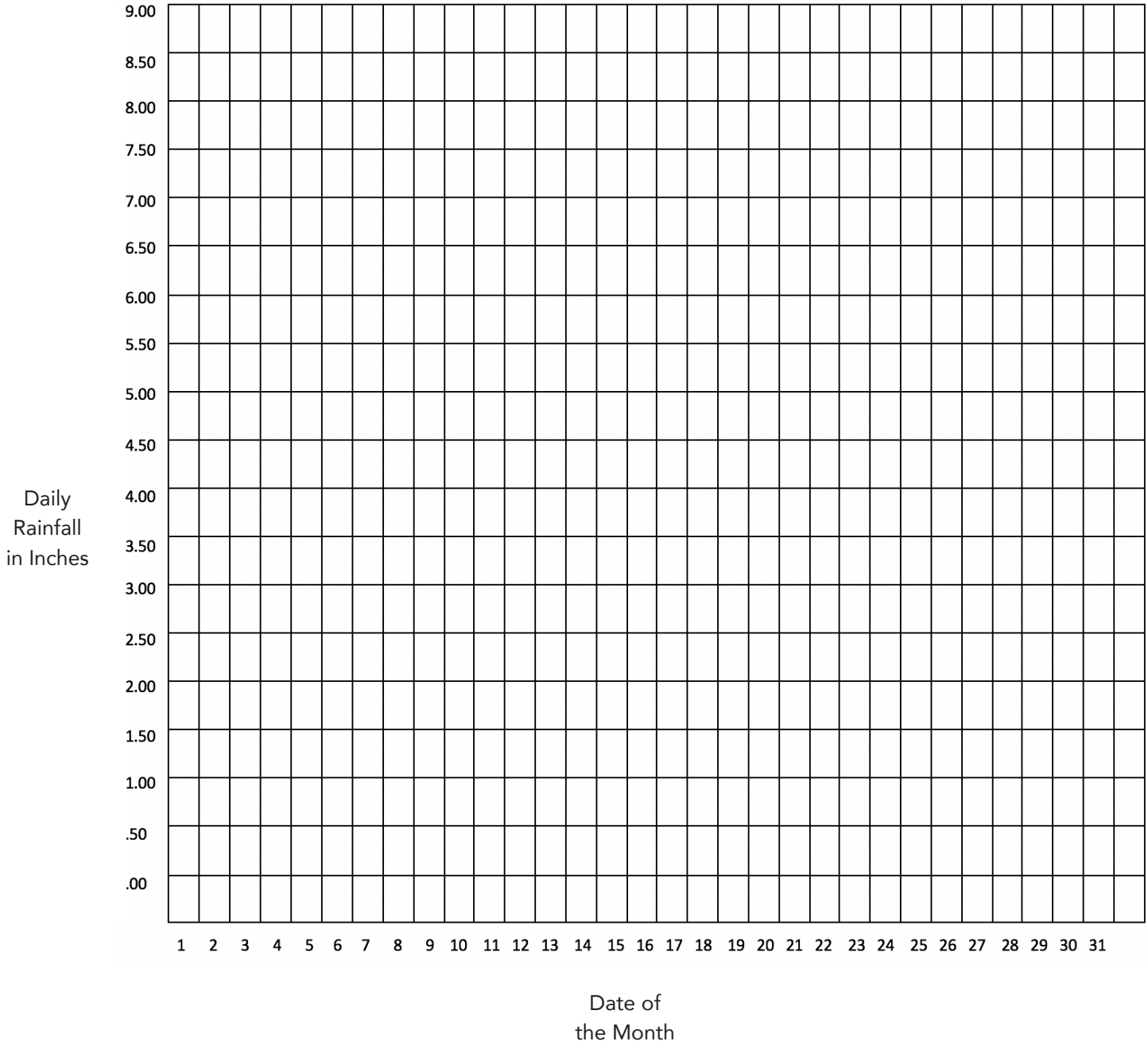

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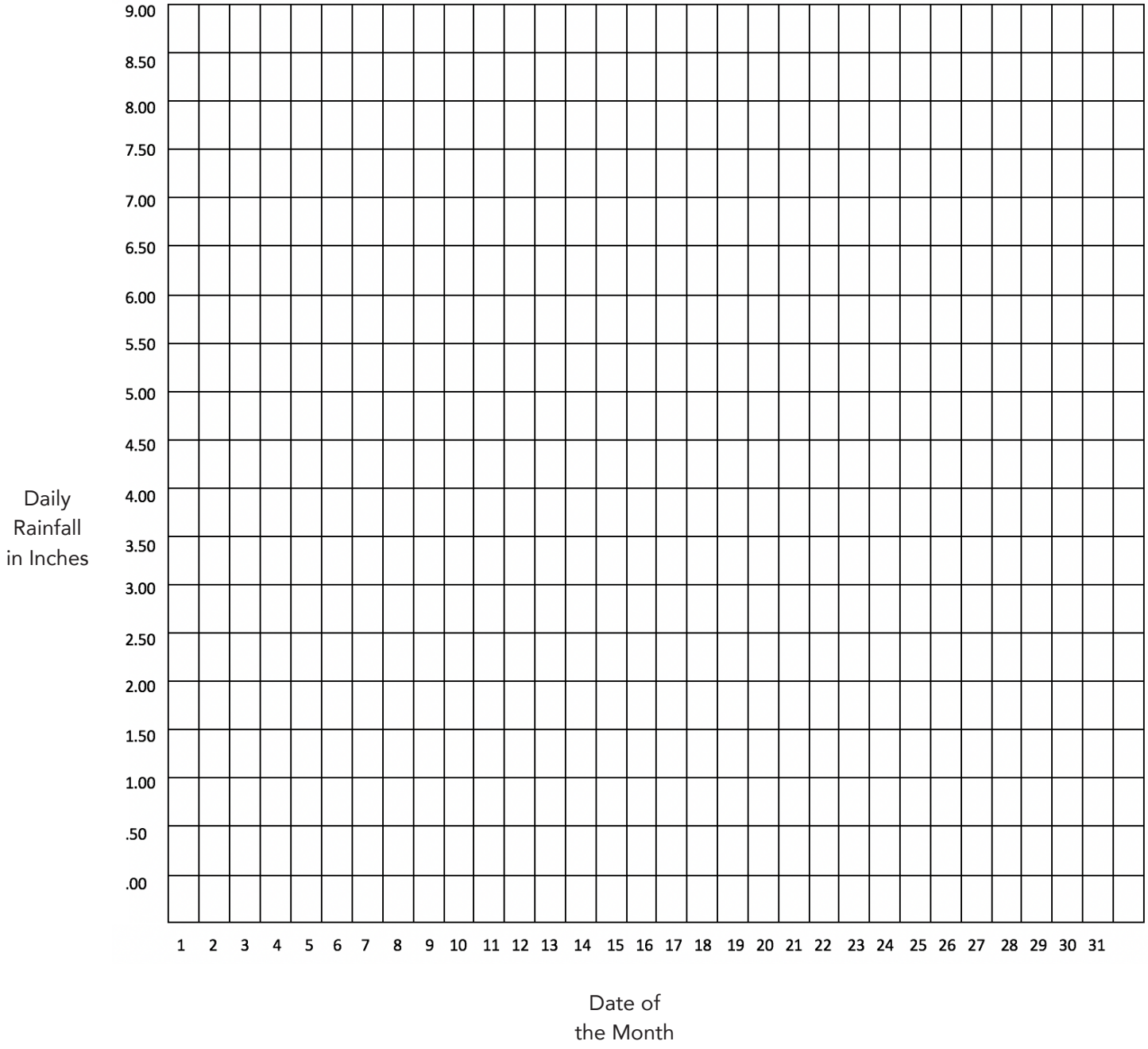

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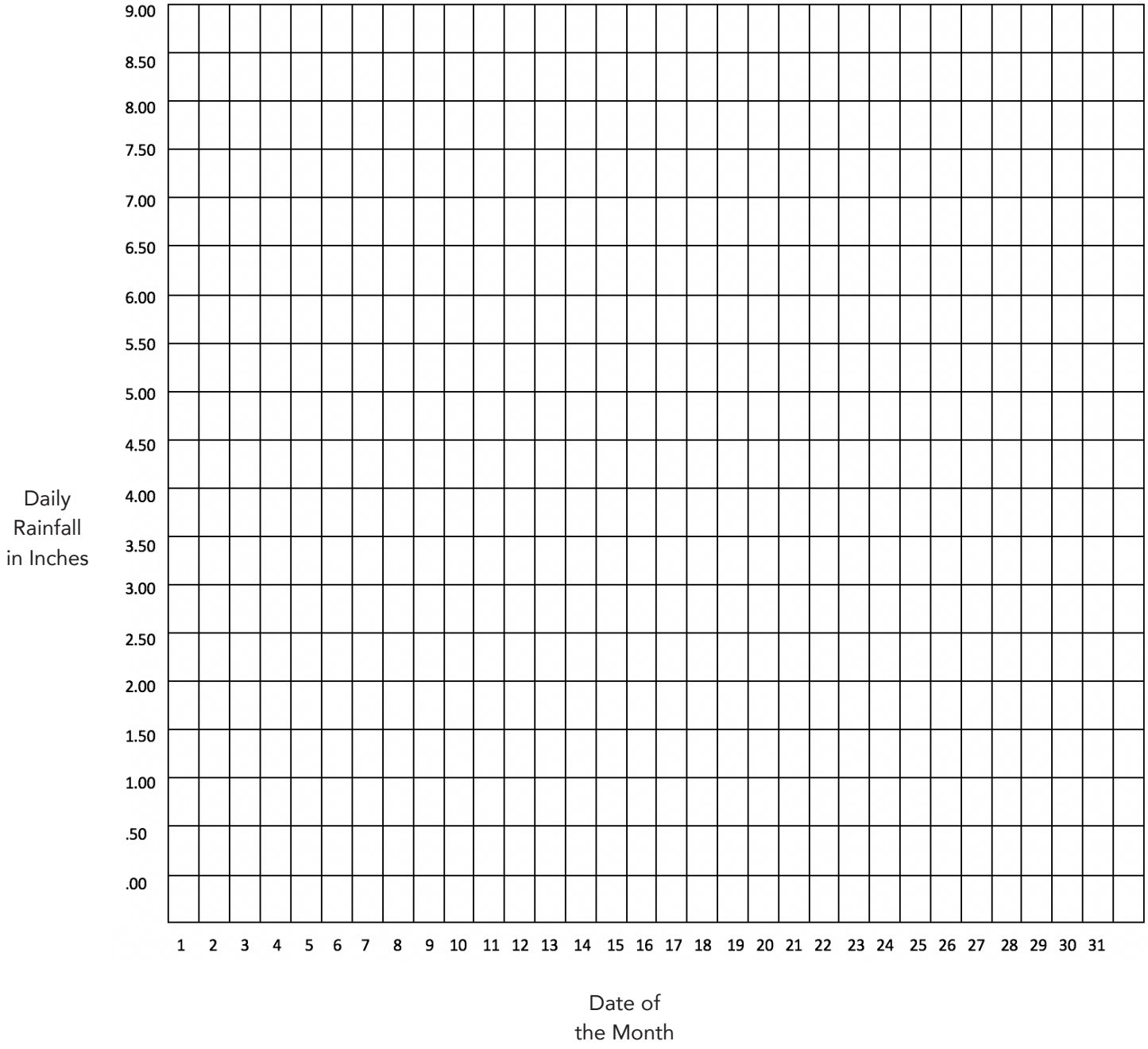

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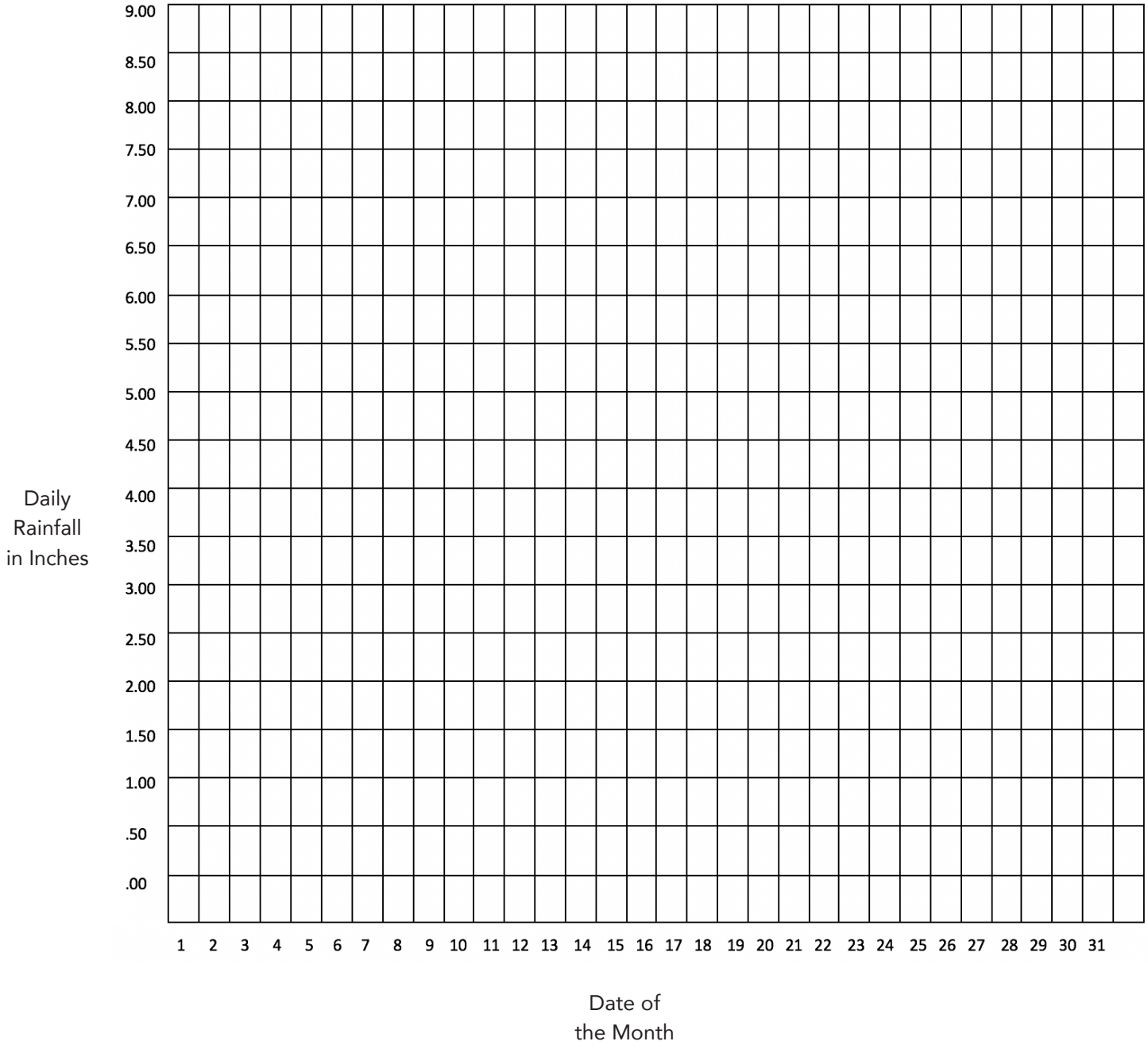

Harvest Record

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

Date of Harvest: _____ Time Spent: _____

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

_____ Weight: _____ Amount Donated: _____ _____ Weight: _____ Amount Donated: _____
_____ Weight: _____ Amount Donated: _____ _____ Weight: _____ Amount Donated: _____
_____ Weight: _____ Amount Donated: _____ _____ Weight: _____ Amount Donated: _____
_____ Weight: _____ Amount Donated: _____ _____ Weight: _____ Amount Donated: _____

What organization or group received your donation of produce?

_____

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

_____

Do you have any other comments or observations?

_____

_____

_____

Date of Harvest: _____ Time Spent: _____

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

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What organization or group received your donation of produce?

_____

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

_____

Do you have any other comments or observations?

_____

_____

_____

Harvest Record (continued)

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 from each of the vegetables that you harvested and donated. Also record your expenses on page 6.

_____ Weight: _____ Amount Donated: _____ _____ Weight: _____ Amount Donated: _____
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_____ Weight: _____ Amount Donated: _____ _____ Weight: _____ Amount Donated: _____

What organization or group received your donation of produce?

_____

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

_____

Do you have any other comments or observations?

_____

_____

_____

Date of Harvest: _____ Time Spent: _____

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

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What organization or group received your donation of produce?

_____

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

_____

Do you have any other comments or observations?

_____

_____

_____

Total Harvest and 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 weight of donated produce from each crop.

_____ Number of times harvested: _____ Total weight: _____ Weight of Donated Produce: _____

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_____ Number of times harvested: _____ Total weight: _____ Weight of Donated Produce: _____

_____ Number of times harvested: _____ Total weight: _____ Weight of Donated Produce: _____

What was the total weight of the produce that you harvested and donated? _____
What was the weight of your total donations?_____
What was your total expenses? _____
How many hours did you spend working with your produce business, and what was the estimated value of the produce you donated? To figure the estimated value of produce, use the price that you would pay at the grocery store per pound for the same item. _____

What did you learn from your gardening experience?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

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