



April Showers bring May Flowers



Why is rain good?

Springtime means rain showers in the Inland Northwest. With the arrival of spring, the snow melts, the ground thaws, and the rain falls. On a typical spring day, we can experience rain or hail showers one minute and clear, sunny skies the next!



Sometimes spring showers may be troublesome - like when they cause your baseball game to be cancelled or your clothes to get soaked on your way home from school. But spring showers are a wonderful thing - they help plants grow!

Did you know that even lightning can help plants grow? A flash of lightning gives off enough electric energy and heat to make oxygen and nitrogen combine into nitrates that help plants grow. The nitrogen mixes with the rain to fertilize the plants. So that's why, after thunderstorms, the garden seems so refreshed and green.



Different plants need different temperatures and amounts of rainfall to thrive. The **climate** of an area will determine what plants will grow there, like cactus in the desert.

Rain and the Water Cycle

Have you ever watched what happens when rain falls at your house?



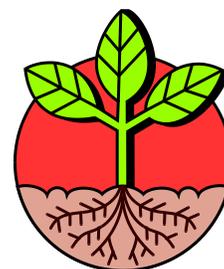
Does some of the rain soak into the ground?

Some of the water will stay in the soil to help the flowers and grass grow. Some of the water will sink further below the surface and become part of the aquifer - the water between rocks that many of us use for drinking water.

Plants Need Soil!

Plants need healthy soil to grow! Soil is made up of tiny broken pieces of rock, organic materials from decomposed plants and animals, water, and air. Soil stores the nutrients, minerals, and water that plants absorb through their roots. These are the same **nutrients** and **minerals** that we need. Luckily, we get them from the plants we eat and we don't have to eat the soil!

Soil not only provides a home for plants but lots of other living things. Can you think of anything that lives in the soil?



That's right, bugs and worms live in the soil!

There are also lots of very small (**microscopic**) living things that we would need a microscope to see. **Did you know that there are more living things in a tablespoon of soil than there are people on the planet!** When you are digging in the soil this spring to plant flowers and vegetables remember how much life the soil supports.

Did you know...

The phrase "**April Showers Bring May Flowers**" goes all the way back to the mid 16th century. A poet and farmer named Thomas Tusser wrote the book [A Hundred Good Points of Husbandry](#) and in the April Section, the following poem was written:

Sweet April showers
do Spring May flowers.

Patience through the most unpleasant times, like April showers, will eventually lead to beauty, like May flowers, is what he meant. As our language changed, so did how we said this old proverb, but the meaning never changed. So just remember this on those rainy Spring days.

April Showers Song

(to the tune of "I'm a Little Teapot")

Pitter patter rain drops (*wiggle fingers to imitate rain*)

Falling from the sky (*wiggle fingers downward*)

Here's my umbrella (*action of opening an umbrella*)

Hold it high! (*hands over head*)

When the rain is over (*bring hands down slowly*)

and the sun begins to glow (*make sun with arms*)

Little flowers start to bud (*Kneel down*)

then grow, grow, grow!!! (*slowly stand up*)

http://www.dltk-holidays.com/spring/april_song.htm

Envirokids: Free Seeds!

Visit the Envirokids booth at the
Arbor Day Compost Fair
Finch Arboretum

3404 W. Woodland Blvd.

Saturday, April 30, 11 a.m. - 2 p.m.

(While Supplies Last)

Community Calender

April

15 Spokane Valley Earth Day
Discovery Playground! 2426 N. Discovery Place,
3-5 p.m., Free

22 Earth Day

23 Earth Day in Spokane
Main Street between Browne and Division,
11 a.m.-4 p.m., Free

30 Arbor Day Compost Fair!
Finch Arboretum,
11 a.m.-2 p.m., Free

May

7 Family Fun Fair
Spokane Convention Center,
12 p.m. -6 p.m., Admission fee

June

25 Great American Backyard Camp-out
Call REI, 328-9900, for more information.

Plants Give Back, too!

Just as much as we humans give back to the earth, plants of all kinds give back to Mother Nature in many ways.

Plants contribute to the water cycle!
Plants put down roots into the soil that draw up water and nutrients into the stem and leaves. They return this water into the air through a process called **transpiration**. This water contributes to the **evaporation** part of the water cycle.

Plants make our air clean for us!

We inhale oxygen and exhale carbon dioxide. Plants do the opposite. They

absorb the carbon dioxide we

exhale into the atmosphere, and release oxygen for us to breathe.

Some plants even help remove

pollutants from the air inside your home. Plants have

different ways of absorbing carbon dioxide, and some even absorb other chemicals that can be harmful to us, like benzene, found in cleaning products and formaldehyde, found in certain paper products. Look for Gerbara Daisys, Peace Lilys, English Ivy and many other plants to help clean the air inside your home!

Plants block dust and pollution!

Pine trees can act like barriers to the

dust and pollutants blowing in the wind everyday. Planting trees in certain places around your house, or even in your neighborhood, can help with reducing dust and other pollutants around your house and neighborhood.



Paint By Numbers

Owley Skywarn is ready for spring showers!

Use the color key and colored pencils to color the picture.

Color Key:

- 1=White
- 2=Black
- 3=Blue
- 4=Orange
- 5=Dark Brown
- 6=Light Brown

EnviroKids Earn Points!

1. Complete the activities on this page,
2. Send it in to Envirokids Club,
3. Earn more points!
4. Redeem your points for prizes - visit www.SpokaneEnviroKids.org for prize information.



Word Scramble

Unscramble the following phrase. Hint - it's a common spring phrase, you can find it on the front page of the newsletter.

liApr wsohers rbngi
yMa wfolres!

Your Answer:

-----!

Definitions:

Here are definitions for the words that are ***bold italics*** in this newsletter.

Microscopic: Very small objects that can only be seen using a microscope

Nutrient: A substance that aids in the growth process.

Mineral: A substance that is not an animal or a vegetable.

Transpiration: The transfer of water from the roots of a plant to the atmosphere.

Evaporation: The transfer of water from a liquid state to a gas state.

Pollutant: A chemical that makes air, water or soil harmful to living things.

Climate: The prevailing weather conditions of a particular region.



EnviroKids' Club

EnviroKids' Club
c/o National Weather Service
2601 N. Rambo Rd.
Spokane, WA 99224

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Happy Earth Day!

EnviroKids'... caring for the Earth

EnviroKids' Club provides its 300+ members with information and activities to explore aspects of the environment: air, water, weather, garbage and recycling, plants and animals. The Club is open to all Spokane County residents who are in grades K-6.

Club members receive a newsletter in the mail four times a year. The newsletter contains activities to complete and ideas for activities at home or in the community. Members who are interested can complete activities and/or participate in some of the events to earn points. Earned points can then be used to trade-in for prizes. Members need to participate in at least one activity per year to receive newsletters. For more information, visit www.spokaneenvirokidsclub.org.

To earn points, mail your completed activities by June 30, 2011 to:

EnviroKids' Club c/o National Weather Service
2601 N. Rambo Rd. Spokane, WA 99224

Complete the activities in the newsletter, fill in this form and send it back to us to earn your points! Do you have a friend or sibling who would like to join Envirokids' Club? Copy this page for them to send in and be added to our mailing list.

Name: _____ Age: _____ School: _____

Home Mailing Address: _____

E-mail Address: _____ Phone: _____

My child has permission to participate in EnviroKids' Club activities that I accompany him/her to and permission is granted to use his/her photo that may be taken at such event, for promoting the Club (newsletter, flyers, ads, website, etc.)

Parent Signature. *Please print name, then sign and date*

EnviroKids' Club Partners: National Weather Service, Spokane County Water Resources, Spokane Regional Clean Air Agency, Spokane Regional Solid Waste System, Spokane River Forum, WA State Department of Ecology and West Valley Outdoor Learning Center.

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