



The Eldergrow garden offers a therapeutic connection to nature where residents engage in meaningful ways with the garden – cognitively, socially, spiritually, emotionally, physically and more.

Summary: How to check and water the garden.

Activity Objectives:

- Objective 1: Resident engages in sensory stimulation (SS)
- Objective 2: Resident will engage in use of motor skills (MS)
- Objective 3: Resident will socialize with fellow residents (S)

Supplies:

1. Small watering can for resident use
2. Optional: Larger watering can, as a back-up

Set-Up:

- Move garden into central location so residents can gather around it - *don't forget the brakes!*
- Fill the small watering can with water. Also, fill any large watering can if the garden has one to refill the small one from.
- Have garden journal ready for any comments or observations.

Directions:

Step 1: Observation (You can enter any observations into your garden journal).

As residents gather, encourage them to look at their garden.

Q: Do any plants look dried out or wilting?

- Gather around the garden to check if it needs water.
- There are several ways to check the soil for dryness:
 - 1) Look at the soil, especially right around the plants. Does it look light & dry?
 - 2) Feel it with your fingers. Does it feel dry & crumbly?
- If you have access to a moisture sensor, feel free to move the moisture sensor around the garden. The sensor will flash if the soil is too dry.
- If several sections of soil feel or look dry, it's time to water the garden.

Step 2: Watering the Garden

- Water near the base of the plants to ensure the water soaks into the soil and isn't lost to evaporation.
- Get some volunteers to water with the small watering can.
 - Pour water for 3 seconds around each plant that had dry soil. Help count to three each time to keep watering from being too much or too little.
 - Too much water will run down the garden drain and it will have to be emptied more often. You also can't "undo" overwatering of plants, but you can always add more.
 - Give special attention to the plants in the back, because the back tends to get watered less by residents on their own since it is harder to reach.
 - Don't forget to mark the garden watering chart with a check or X for that day to indicate that the garden got watered.

Step 3: Closing:

Record in garden journal.

- Q: What did you learn today?
- Q: What was your favorite part of today's activity?