

# The Watering Can



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## Water, Rain, and Science

While Rhode Island continues in a "drought watch" as the result of low groundwater levels – especially in southern Rhode Island – February 2008 has turned into the second wettest February on record. As gardeners, we all are aware of the inconsistencies and lack of logic that comes along with southern New England weather. Watching the weather and using dowsing sticks to find water are all tried and true methods used in the past to support gardening and plentiful harvests while modern practices include more scientific methods.

### What is Water Dowsing?

Dowsing, in general terms, is the art of finding water in the ground with the aid of a dowsing stick, rods, or a pendulum. Also known as water witching, dowsing is an ancient practice thought to date back at least 8,000 years. During the 15th and 16th centuries, dowsers were often denounced as practitioners of evil. Martin Luther said dowsing was "the work of devil" (and hence the term "water witching"). Albert Einstein, however, was convinced of the authenticity of dowsing. He said, "I know very well that many scientists consider dowsing as they do astrology, as a type of ancient superstition. According to my conviction this is, however, unjustified. The dowsing rod is a simple instrument that shows the reaction of the human nervous system to certain factors which are unknown to us at this time." ( <http://paranormal.about.com/library>).

### How Does Water Dowsing Work?

The quick answer is that no one really knows, not even experienced dowsers. Some theorize there is a psychic connection established between the dowser and the sought object. The dowser, by concentrating on the hidden object, is somehow able to tune in to the energy force or "vibration" of the object which, in turn, forces the dowsing rod or stick to move. The dowsing tool may act as a kind of amplifier or antenna for tuning into the energy.

Skeptics, of course, say that dowsing doesn't work at all. Dowsers who seem to have a track record for success, they contend, are either lucky or they have good instincts or trained knowledge for where water can be found. For believer or skeptic there is no definitive proof either way.

### Modern Science

Today, Rhode Island receives scientific weather information from the National Oceanographic Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) National Weather Service (NWS) who provide real-time information on weather and water conditions. While most of us receive this information from our local television news station weather update, some of us go so far as to pull up direct information from the NWS website, <http://www.erh.noaa.gov/er/box/> Oddly enough, some of the scientific information summarized on this website has been gathered, in fact, by gardeners, weather watchers, and, perhaps, even bird watchers.