## Capillary Action

**Materials**
- 6 jars or glasses
- Food coloring
- Paper towels
- Water
- Scissors

**Procedure**
1. Fill 3 jars with water.
2. Add a few drops of food coloring to the water, one color per jar. Primary colors work best.
3. Place all 6 jars in a circle, alternating the empty jars with the water jars.
5. For each jar, add the end of a paper towel, connecting it with the jar next to it. Each jar should have two paper towels, each going in a different direction.

**Results**
In just a few minutes, you can observe water being transported into the empty jars through the paper towels. The colored water will blend together to make new colors.

**Why?**
Paper towels, and the plants they are made of, consist of a sugar compound called cellulose. Cellulose can resist gravity and pull water upwards through a process called capillary action. When water molecules cling to a different substance — in this case, the paper towels — the process is called adhesion. However, when water molecules cling to each other, the process is called cohesion. Capillary action occurs when adhesion is stronger than cohesion.

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Did you know Lichterman Nature Center is a certified arboretum with over 60 species of native trees?