

## Classroom Guide

# *Muncha! Muncha! Muncha!*

written by Candace Fleming and illustrated by G. Brian Karas  
published by Anne Schwartz Books/Atheneum, 2002

*A note to the teacher:* This book can be used in a variety of ways for both older and younger students.



## Themes:

- ◆ All About Gardens
- ◆ Word Play: Onomatopoeia

## About the Book

After planting the garden he has dreamed about for years, Mr. McGreely tries to find a way to keep some persistent bunnies from eating all his vegetables.

## About the Author

Candace Fleming is the author of numerous books for children, including *Ben Franklin's Almanac*, an ALA Notable Book and an ALA Best Book for Young Adults, as well as *Tippy, Tippy, Tippy, Hide!*, *Gabriella's Song*, and *When Agnes Caws*, all ALA Notable Books.

## About the Illustrator

G. Brian Karas has illustrated over 70 books that have won many honors including the Boston Globe/Horn Book Honor in 1997 for his first venture as an author/illustrator, *Home on the Bayou*. He has illustrated the High Rise Private Eyes series by Cynthia Rylant, as well as *Saving Sweetness*, *Princess Fishtail*, and Candace Fleming's *Tippy, Tippy, Tippy, Hide!*

## Things to think about before you read the book

1. Where does your food come from?
2. How many different kinds of vegetables can you name? Can you think of any unusual ones? How would you describe what they taste like?
3. Do you know anyone who has a garden? What is that garden like? Have you ever helped?
4. What are the things needed to make plants grow?
5. Have you ever wanted to do something but been afraid to start it? What was it? What made you finally do it?
6. Have you ever grown anything from seed?

7. Have you ever gone to a farm or orchard to pick something you can eat (i.e., strawberries, apples, peaches, bananas)?

### ***All about Gardens***

Gardens are a wonderful way to connect to the land and to remind students where their food comes from. Science comes alive as students interact with the plants and insects that live in a garden. Younger students love to be outside “playing” in the dirt. They find great focus when their play yields results like carrots or lettuce. Many communities report a decrease in vandalism when kids find something to be proud of that is their own—like a garden.

Included in this teacher guide are a variety of ways to incorporate gardens and garden thinking into your classroom. When possible, direct web links to garden resources, lesson plans, and step-by-step instructions for creating gardens or garden-inspired products have been included.

### **Gardens and History**

Victory gardens were vegetable, herb, and fruit gardens planted by civilians during World War II to take the pressure off the public food supply. They were also wonderful moral boosters because they brought communities together for a common purpose. One or two generations ago it was more common to grow food to can for winter. Children were often required to help as part of their daily chores. Today farmer’s markets and CSA (community service gardens) are becoming more common as our population focuses more on healthy eating and organic foods.

#### **CLASSROOM ACTIVITY**

Have your students interview an older person about a garden they had or helped with as a child. They could also interview someone who lives on a farm or works in a natural foods venue (some of the questions would need to be adapted). Younger students can draw a picture of that person in their garden or farm. Older or more advanced students can conduct an actual interview and write a report to deliver to the class.

#### **Sample interview questions**

1. Did you help in a garden when you were my age? If yes, where was it? What is one thing you remember about working in it?
2. If you didn’t work in a garden at my age, do you know someone who had a garden (someone that lived on a farm would also work)?
3. Have you ever grown something from a seed? What was it?
4. Where did your food come from when you were my age?
5. Have you ever had trouble with insects or animals in a garden? If so, tell me the story.

## TAKING IT FURTHER

Most communities have CSAs (community supported agriculture). Individuals buy shares in a local farm and get fresh produce from that farm once a week during the growing season. Contact one and see if the farmer will come and talk to your classroom.<sup>1</sup> Or set up a field trip to visit the local farm. In many communities, Coop Grocery stores offer classes to schools that teach about organic gardening and sustainable agriculture. Contact your local food cooperative to see if classes are offered in your area.<sup>2</sup>

### *Garden Songs:*

There are many songs appropriate for younger students about gardens. Here is a small sample:

#### **IF ALL THE RAINDROPS WERE LEMON DROPS AND GUMDROPS**

*If all the raindrops were lemon drops and gumdrops*

*If all the raindrops were lemon drops and gumdrops*

*Oh, what a rain that would be!*

*Standing outside, with my mouth open wide*

*Ah, ah, ah, ah, ah, ah, ah, ah, ah*

*If all the raindrops were lemondrops and gumdrops*

*Oh, what a rain that would be!*

*If all the sunbeams were bubblegum and ice cream*

*Oh, what a sun that would be!*

*Standing outside, with my mouth open wide*

*Ah, ah, ah, ah, ah, ah, ah, ah, ah*

*If all the sunbeams were bubblegum and ice cream*

*Oh, what a sun that would be!*

from [www.theteachersguide.com/ChildrensSongs.htm](http://www.theteachersguide.com/ChildrensSongs.htm)

#### **RAIN, RAIN, GO AWAY**

*Rain, rain, go away*

*Come again some other day (2x)*

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<sup>1</sup> The Farm School program is designed to connect schools and local farms. Go to [www.farmtoschool.org](http://www.farmtoschool.org), [www.foodsecurity.org/farm\\_to\\_school.html](http://www.foodsecurity.org/farm_to_school.html), or [www.foodroutes.org/farmtoschool.jsp](http://www.foodroutes.org/farmtoschool.jsp) for more information.

<sup>2</sup> Go to [www.coopdirectory.org](http://www.coopdirectory.org) to find the food coop nearest you.

**MR MCGREELY'S VEGETABLE PATCH (TO THE TUNE OF *MARY HAD A LITTLE LAMB*)**

*Lettuce greens are crisp to crunch, crisp to crunch, crisp to crunch*

*Lettuce greens are crisp to crunch, I eat them in a salad.*

*Carrots grow deep in the ground, in the ground, in the ground,*

*Carrots grow deep in the ground with a green floppy hat.*

*Peas are round and in a pod, in a pod, in a pod*

*Peas are round and in a pod, I pick them from a vine.*

*Tomatoes they are juicy red, juicy red, juicy red*

*Tomatoes they are juicy red, they come in many sizes.*

### ***Creating a School Garden***

School gardens began to appear in the early 1900s as a way for students to study nature, learn work habits and develop appropriate social attitudes. A school garden can be a plot of land on school property or containers in the classroom. No matter what you do, the students will discover things about themselves and their relationship to the natural world.

**SOME GREAT WEBSITES TO GET YOU STARTED:**

[www.kidsgardening.com](http://www.kidsgardening.com) (National Gardening Association Site)

Site includes grant opportunities, on-line newsletter, gardening ideas, gardening with kids store, lesson plans/resources - absolutely the best website for one stop shopping for gardening with kids

[www.infotoday.com/MMSchools/mar01/cybe0103.htm](http://www.infotoday.com/MMSchools/mar01/cybe0103.htm)

Great article about starting a school garden with many links

[www.nwf.org/backyard](http://www.nwf.org/backyard) (National Wildlife Federation Site on backyard habitats)

Step by step instructions for getting started. Site includes a native plant list for your area. (click on "let's get started" at the bottom of the page)

## *Art From the Garden*

### **Supply list:**

Paper, contact paper, pencils, crayons or markers

### **ACTIVITY:**

1. Find at least five things outside. Remind students not to pick anything unless given permission.
2. Glue the items onto paper, one per page.
3. For younger students: Have them write the name of the object found outside and one word that describes it. Draw a picture of that object in its natural setting.
4. For older or more advanced students: Have them write the name of the object found outside and at least one paragraph describing it. They could also write a poem using the five senses.

For example – if the item found is a leaf:

*A leaf  
Caterpillars tickling its backside  
Chomping their way across the spine  
Silken smooth in my bare hand  
A green masterpiece of nature  
Flapping in the hot summer breeze  
A leaf*

5. When all the writing is done, cover each page in clear contact paper. Optional: Tie pages together with cardboard covers to make a classroom book.

## *Easy Recipes with Fun Garden Themes:*

Recipes at: [www.pbskids.org/zoom/activities/café](http://www.pbskids.org/zoom/activities/café)

- ◆ Ants on a log
- ◆ Bunny salad
- ◆ Butterfly sandwich
- ◆ Lettuce boats
- ◆ Edible spiders
- ◆ Bunny cake
- ◆ Butterfly cake
- ◆ Zoom into bloom garden cake
- ◆ Dirt pudding

## *The Science of Gardens:*

### **CLASSROOM ACTIVITY:**

#### **Supply list:**

Journal or paper, something hard to write on, pencil. Optional: magnifying glasses or small picture frame.

#### **Curriculum Connections**

Language arts, team work, science (observation, cooking, creating a garden), art, biology (the study of plant/animal interactions)

#### **Activity:**

1. Go outside and find a spot to sit. For a designated amount of time (shorter for younger students), have the students sit and watch the world around them. Write down everything they see. For younger students it can be a one word description or a picture. For older or more advanced students have them draw or write in greater detail.
2. Move to a different spot and repeat step 1. Do this three to five times so each student is observing a variety of objects, people, animals, and places. Make sure they notice the details. Optional: have them look at things through a magnifying glass or small picture frame. The magnifying glass will make the object seem bigger. The small picture frame will focus the students' eye (and therefore attention) on a specific area.
3. Return indoors and choose one object observed. For younger students, have them write about what they just did. For example: "I went outside and sat in the grass. I watched a bush. At first nothing happened. Then I saw a butterfly."
4. For older or more advanced students: have them look up information in an encyclopedia, on the internet or at the library about one thing that they observed. Have them write about at least three of the following (feel free to use your own questions as well or instead of these):
  - ◆ What is the growing season? When do you see this thing?
  - ◆ What does it eat (if a plant, what does it need to grow)?
  - ◆ Does it have any natural predators (things that eat it)?
  - ◆ Can it ever be domesticated (live indoors)?
  - ◆ Compare the size of it to something else.
  - ◆ Where did it come from?
  - ◆ Is it rare or common to see this thing?
  - ◆ What part of the world does it live in? What is its native habitat?

## ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY

Have the students keep a garden journal, either of the school garden or of a garden/yard at home. Have them observe the same spot at the same time every day for a week or at different times of day. Record the time of the observation. Answer the following questions (additional questions can be added):

- ◆ Is what you observe affected by the weather?
- ◆ Have you observed anything unusual this week?
- ◆ Does the time of day matter?

## Word Play: Onomatopoeia

Onomatopoeia is a word that sounds like the object it is describing and there are many examples in *Muncha! Muncha! Muncha!* (i.e. muncha, yummy, gobbling, crisp, gnawed).

### CLASSROOM ACTIVITY FOR YOUNGER STUDENTS:

#### Supply list:

Copy of *Muncha! Muncha! Muncha!*, crayons or markers, paper

#### Activity:

1. Talk about “sound words” as a class. Give some examples (“stomp,” “giggle,” “zip”). Read *Muncha! Muncha! Muncha!* Have the students raise their hands every time they hear a “sound word.” At the end of the reading, write a list on the board.
2. Have each child select one “sound word” from the list and draw a picture with an animal or person doing that thing. For example: if the word the student chooses is “yummy” they might draw a picture of a child eating an ice-cream cone or a bowl of apples.
3. After the drawings are finished, display them. Group all the pictures based on the same word together. Talk about our differences. Many students chose to draw a picture from the same word but had many different ideas, each one a good one.

### CLASSROOM ACTIVITY FOR OLDER OR MORE ADVANCED STUDENTS:

#### Supply list:

Copies of *Muncha! Muncha! Muncha!* for each team, paper, pencils.

#### Curriculum Connections

Language arts, team work, diversity (younger activity), creative problem solving (older/more advanced activity)

#### Activity:

1. Divide your classroom into teams and give them 3+5 minutes to find as many “sound words” in *Muncha! Muncha! Muncha!* as they can. Make a master list on the board.

2. Challenge teams to make their own list of “sound words” not found in the book. Give them 3-5 minutes to create their list. Have each team read off their list. If any other team has the same word, both teams must cross it off. Whichever team has the most UNIQUE/NEW words, wins.
3. Have the students write a paragraph (for about 5 minutes) about something that happened to them in the last week. It can be something as simple as getting on the school bus, doing an outside chore or finishing their homework. They have to use at least three sound words in their paragraph. When they are done, give students an opportunity to share their writing with the class.

## ***Companion Books***

### **RABBITS**

*My Friend Rabbit*, Eric Rohmann, Roaring Brook Press, 2002

*Tale of Peter Rabbit*, Beatrix Potter, Warne, 1987

*Velveteen Rabbit*, Margery Williams, illus by William Nicholson, Doubleday, 1958

*Zomo the Rabbit: A Trickster Tale from West Africa*, Gerald McDermott, Voyager Books, 1996

### **GARDENING-THEMED PICTURE BOOKS**

*Carrot Seed*, Ruth Krauss, illus by Crockett Johnson, HarperCollins, 1982

*Eating the Alphabet: Fruits and Vegetables from A-Z*, Lois Ehlert, Voyager Books, 1993

*Growing Vegetable Soup*, Lois Ehlert, Voyager books, 1990

*Jack’s Garden*, Henry Cole, HarperTrophy, 1997

*Market Day: A Story Told with Folk Art*, Lois Ehlert, Voyager Books, 2002

*Miss Rumphius*, Barbara Cooney, Puffin, 1985

*Oh, Say Can You Seed?: All About Flowering Plants (Cat in the Hat’s Learning Library)*,  
Bonnie Worth, illus by Aristides Ruiz, Random House Books for Young  
Readers, 2001

### **GARDENING POETRY**

*Earth is Painted Green*, ed by Barbara Brenner, illus by S.D. Schindler, Byron Preiss  
Publications, 2002

*Hummingbird Nest: A Journal of Poems*, Kristine O’Connell George, illus by Barry  
Moser, Harcourt, 2004

*Laughing Tomatoes and Other Spring Poems/Jitomates Risuenos y otros poemas de  
primavera*, Francisco X. Alarcon, illus by Maya Christina Gonzales, Children’s  
Book Press, 1997

*Over in the Garden*, Jennifer Ward, illus by Kenneth Spengler, Rising Moon Books, 2002

## *Resources for the Teacher*

### **BOOKS**

*Gardening Wizardry for Kids*, L. Patricia Kite and Yvette Santiago Banek, Barron's Educational Series, 1995

*Roots, Shoots, Buckets & Boots: Gardening Together with Children*, Sharon Lovejoy, Workman Publishing Company, 1999

*Your Rabbit: A Kid's Guide to Raising and Showing*, Nancy Searle, Storey Publishing, LLC, 1992

### **A FUN MUSIC CD**

*Nature Nuts*—album by Mary Miché. Available for \$11.50/cassette from Mary Miché, P.O. Box 11545, Berkeley, CA 94701. Includes such songs as Animal Party; Spiders and Snakes; Banana Slug Song; You Can't Make a Turtle Come Out; Little Skunk; Dirt Made My Lunch; The Garden Song; Six Plant Parts; The Sprout Song; Move Over, You Big Trees; Bugs in Your Bark; Lotta Seeds Grow, and other ecology songs from The Banana Slug String Band, Malvina Reynolds, others. [www.bananaslugstringband.com](http://www.bananaslugstringband.com)

### **WEBSITES**

[www.kidsgardeningstore.com/books.html](http://www.kidsgardeningstore.com/books.html)

all kinds of books about gardening with and for children

[www.edibleschoolyard.org](http://www.edibleschoolyard.org)

[www.aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/nutrition/schoolgardens/schgard.html](http://www.aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/nutrition/schoolgardens/schgard.html)

information about school gardens

[www.cln.org/themes/gardening.html](http://www.cln.org/themes/gardening.html)

multiple links to gardening ideas with and for children

[www.eduref.org/cgi-bin/lessons.cgi/Science/Agriculture](http://www.eduref.org/cgi-bin/lessons.cgi/Science/Agriculture)

lessons plans (K-12) on gardens and agriculture

[www.kidsgardening.com/growingideas/projects/library.html](http://www.kidsgardening.com/growingideas/projects/library.html)

great variety of lesson plans with the theme "gardening with and for kids"

[www.aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/kindergarden/Fun/project.htm](http://www.aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/kindergarden/Fun/project.htm)

a wide variety of garden related activities for younger learners