

The Ugly Vegetables

by Grace Lin

A story about a little girl who thinks her mother's garden is the ugliest in the neighborhood until she discovers that flowers might look and smell pretty but Chinese vegetable soup smells best of all.



Read

Before:

Introduce the book and tell the children a little bit about it. Follow that with a comment or question that is related to the story such as, *Have you ever eaten Chinese vegetables?* Encourage a discussion so the children can comment, ask questions, and express their feelings. Set the stage for listening by asking an "I wonder" statement based on the cover illustration.

- I wonder what the mother and little girl are planting?

During:

Encourage the children to comment on the illustrations, ask questions, and predict what will happen next in the story. Children gain confidence and a sense of achievement through being able to correctly predict how a story will end. Point out "rare words" (e.g., those words that are not commonly used in every day conversation) and help the children relate the meaning in a way that makes sense to them.

Rare Words in *The Ugly Vegetables*

- wriggle: twist and turn
- wrinkled: a small messy or unintentional fold
- prickly: small sharp spikes
- icky: nasty or unpleasant
- chop: cut something up with a sharp tool
- aie-yow: ouch
- sheau hwang gua: Chinese cucumbers, these are long, thin, and covered with bumps
- shiann tsay: red-lined, red-rimmed Chinese vegetable
- torng hau: chrysanthemum like flowers and edible leaves
- aroma: a pleasant smell

After:

Discuss the story. Ask questions...

- Have you ever helped someone plant a garden? What did you plant?
- The little girl and her mother used a tall shovel to plant their garden. What other tools could you use?
- The little girl and her mother used a hose to water their garden. What else could you use?
- Seed packages are used to mark the rows in a garden. What did the little girl and her mother use?
- The little girl's garden looked like grass when it started growing. What did the neighbor's garden look like?
- The neighbor's garden attracts what type of insects?
- The little girl and her mother planted a Chinese vegetable garden. What did the mother make from their garden?

Do

Pretty Vegetable Collage

Make a vegetable collage. Have the children cut their favorite vegetables from magazines and paste on paper.