



**Gilles Clément
& Vincent Gravé**

A Big Garden



May Garden

The very first garden in history was filled with vegetables and fruits:
a crop garden.

It started out when people began to settle the land. Previously, they were nomadic.

Nomads roam about looking for fruits and vegetables in the wild. They do not have gardens.

The settlers began going in search of seeds and plants that would bear them things to eat.

They then sowed and planted them in a closed, protected area: the garden.

In earlier times, they would find seeds and shoots in the natural habitat, near to their village or even farther away, when they were traveling.

They were gathering.

Nowadays, of course, people visit stores for their food.

They go shopping.

To create a garden, the gardener needs to arrange the area: he makes lines, squares and sections.

Then he has to figure out how to arrange his crops.

At first, he might separate the different vegetables and trees he has decided to grow.

He could also change his mind and mix all the plants together. The vegetables would grow just as well, maybe even better. But they would be more complicated to maintain, water and harvest.

At last, the gardener comes upon the best option. He groups his plants according to type and creates a system.

He chooses his seeds, paying careful attention to the climates and seasons in which they will grow best. A seedbed cannot simply be planted at any time of year, so the gardener keeps a diary to write down his planting schedule.

He always has his hands in the soil and looks up to the sky.



Can you spot a fox, a squirrel,
a cat and a mouse?
What other animals can you find?





June Fruit

The gardener sows and harvests.

But he does more than just that.

From the moment he plants to the day he harvests, days and months pass by. This is a time of growth, transformation and development. Everything goes well, as long as the weeds don't overrun the plants, the birds don't steal the seeds, the rabbits don't make nests in the onion patch, the mole doesn't build a tunnel beneath the radishes, the crickets dutifully eat the aphids and the rain falls gently and regularly.

In the time from first planting his seeds to harvesting his crop, the gardener observes, stands in awe and ... simply gets on with his gardening.

Put simply, gardening is all about interpreting the future and overcoming the unforeseeable.

The gardener is required to:

- remove any grass that might hamper the seedlings;
- fetch water when things get too dry;
- prop up any plant that cannot stand by itself;
- return the mulch the fox has disturbed below the tomatoes;
- protect a hitherto unknown species, new and in full bloom. How did that get there?;
- harvest the lettuce before it goes to seed;
- cut back the apple tree and remove the deadwood;
- hang up a worn CD that shimmers in the sunlight and distracts the birds from stealing cherries;
- pick fruit at just the right time ...

The long awaited fruits are watched while they grow until their color indicates they are ripe and ready to eat.

Some untended fruits appear in the middle of summer on the ends of thorny bramble branches. Blackberries, wild strawberries, blueberries, walnuts, chestnuts, medlar cherry fruits, hazelnuts, Cornelian cherries ... these fruits are picked as a gift.



Where is the hungry giant caterpillar?
What is a shark doing in the field?!
Can you find him?



October Mushrooms

Mushrooms are not animals and they are not plants.
Mushrooms are mushrooms.

They reign apart.

They are part of a group of remarkable living things called saprophytes, better known as fungi. Fungi exist in the company of other beings, accompanying them or living of them.

They sometimes live alone, especially the very big ones.

We should recognize them more than we do. They show off their beautiful hats, their stalk-like parasols (umbels), their delicate tissue caps and their coral-like shapes. But their appearances are quite temporary.

They spring up when it is time to fertilize, only for a few days or weeks towards the end of summer when the autumn rains are beginning to refresh the soil.

For the rest of the year, mushrooms remain silent, invisible and underground.

They live in fibrous blankets in the deep, thick soil. Only animals below the surface of the earth know them well. Worms, larvae, ants, springtails ... they all encounter mushrooms in their underground form (mycelium), and they sometimes feed on them.

Some mushrooms never even appear at ground level. They are content with a life away from light, mating and reproducing oblivious to the sun. Some live in contact with the roots of trees and grass, which is good in times of drought because their roots know how to hold water. Plants need these invisible mushrooms.

Their beautiful hats, known as carpophores, resemble trumpets or umbrellas.

They can be brown, pink, beige or red. Sometimes they are spotted and sometimes striped, but they are always fleshy – a perfect texture for the savory mushroom dishes we like to cook.

Slugs, snails, ants and termites are also keen on mushrooms ... and they do not need to do any cooking to enjoy them as a good meal.

In our woodlands, wild boars, foxes and squirrels all share the same taste we do for parasol mushrooms, ceps and chanterelles.

It is said that deer also love chanterelles.

Well, the gardener does, too.



An accident occurred while painting the fly agaric mushroom!
Can you find out what happened?





November Winter

In winter, the gardener takes a vacation.

The leaves have fallen, fruits have been harvested, as have the green roots of the vegetable patch.

A few cabbages, winter and lamb's lettuce, beet, salsify and carrots remain in the soil.

Some late and rare crops will be harvested only if the weather permits.

The trees and herbs are asleep. The woods are clear and brightness crosses through the forests.

The scene has changed and you can see much farther. Nothing could hinder the view if it were not for the wood of the pines, the hardy hollies and the stone walls. Winter changes little in this town.

Snow falls.

Everything seems to stop and everything begins.

This is a blank sheet on which everything can be written – because everything can be seen as never before.

Traces of foxes, weasels and martens appear now and then. We know they live among us throughout the year, but now we can see them and trace their paths.

The robin swells with down to protect it from the cold.

The disheveled squirrel leaves its hideout in quest of an acorn.

The raven appears to be twice its size.

Insects, lizards and snakes have all disappeared.

The whimpering cry of a black woodpecker and the call the tawny-owl can be heard at nightfall.

Winter is believed to be silent, yet it is punctuated by separate, clear and repeated songs.

These are the conversations heard in cold countries during the winter. Only when spring returns will the animals from the South, the seasonal migrants, make their appearance here.



Do you see the snowman
and the skier?

