

How your garden could grow



YOU WILL NEED A GROWN-UP'S PERMISSION (AND HIS OR HER WILLING COOPERATION) FOR THESE PROJECTS, BUT WOULDN'T IT BE COOL TO 'GROW' A HOUSE? OR HARVEST GIANT VEGETABLES?

SHARON LOVEJOY KNOWS THAT the way most adults garden isn't much fun for kids. She quotes an old saying: "Long, straight rows are such a bore; gardens shouldn't be a chore."

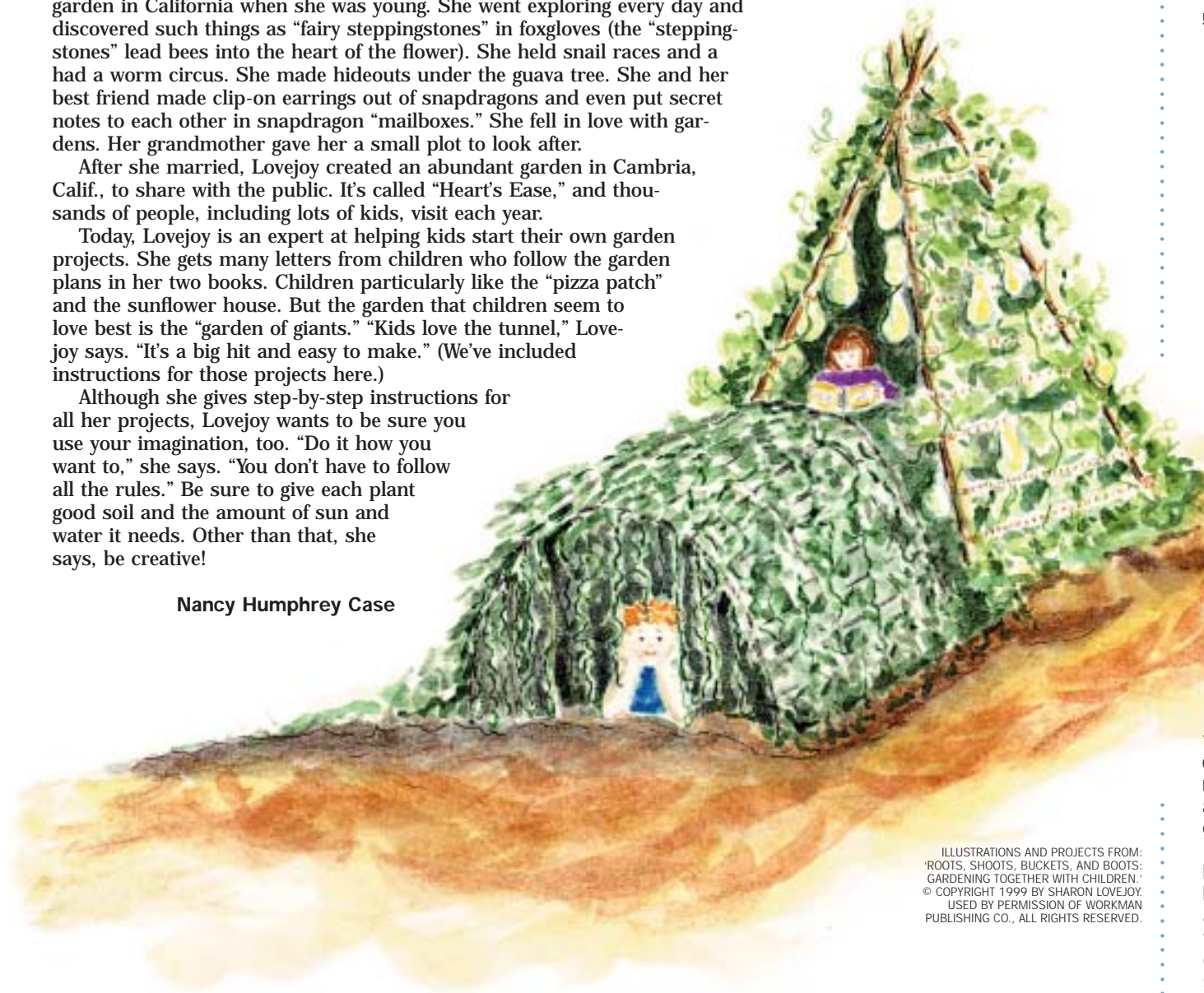
Ms. Lovejoy spent a lot of time in her grandmother's large garden in California when she was young. She went exploring every day and discovered such things as "fairy steppingstones" in foxgloves (the "steppingstones" lead bees into the heart of the flower). She held snail races and had a worm circus. She made hideouts under the guava tree. She and her best friend made clip-on earrings out of snapdragons and even put secret notes to each other in snapdragon "mailboxes." She fell in love with gardens. Her grandmother gave her a small plot to look after.

After she married, Lovejoy created an abundant garden in Cambria, Calif., to share with the public. It's called "Heart's Ease," and thousands of people, including lots of kids, visit each year.

Today, Lovejoy is an expert at helping kids start their own garden projects. She gets many letters from children who follow the garden plans in her two books. Children particularly like the "pizza patch" and the sunflower house. But the garden that children seem to love best is the "garden of giants." "Kids love the tunnel," Lovejoy says. "It's a big hit and easy to make." (We've included instructions for those projects here.)

Although she gives step-by-step instructions for all her projects, Lovejoy wants to be sure you use your imagination, too. "Do it how you want to," she says. "You don't have to follow all the rules." Be sure to give each plant good soil and the amount of sun and water it needs. Other than that, she says, be creative!

Nancy Humphrey Case



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COOL PLANTS

Here are some of Sharon Lovejoy's favorites for kids – cool plants that are easy to care for and grow quickly.

Pumpkins. Try mini-pumpkins in a barrel, giant 'Rouge Vif d'Etampes' for 'furniture,' or the white 'Lumina' that you can paint.

Sunflowers. Use 'Giant Gray Stripe,' 'Paul Bunyan,' or 'Russian Mammoth' for the walls of a sunflower house. 'Sundance Kid' works well for a doll's sunflower house.

Gourds. Plant small, ornamental mixed gourds for their vines and fun shapes; bottle and dipper gourds for craft projects.

Corn. Grow mini-Indian corn and 'strawberry' popcorn in containers. Or try the giant 'Six-Shooter.'

Berries. Alpine strawberries are easy to grow in a border or a pot.

Hollyhocks. They attract butterflies, bumblebees, and hummingbirds.

Carrots. 'Thumbelina,' 'Parmex,' and 'Minicors' do well in pots.

Mimosa. See what happens when you touch them!

Poppies. Watch the flowers close in the evening.

Tomatoes. Tiny golden currant, yellow pear-shaped, red cherry, and grape tomatoes are kids' favorites.

Trees. Plant a 'birthday tree,' 'hideout' trees such as weeping willows, or Harry Lauder's walking stick.

MINI PIZZA PATCH

Fill a half barrel or very large pot with good potting soil. (The container should have holes in the bottom for drainage.) Divide the soil surface into "slices" using pebbles. Plant your favorite pizza ingredients in the slices: cherry tomatoes, baby bell peppers, onions or chives, basil, oregano, etc. Tomatoes love sun, so choose a spot that gets at least six hours of sun every day. Don't forget to water it. Fertilize every two weeks with fish or seaweed emulsion.

Celebrate your harvest with a homegrown pizza party! Look in a cookbook to find a simple recipe for making a pizza crust.

GARDEN OF GIANTS

This garden becomes a living fort with plants so big your friends won't believe you until they see them!

YOU WILL NEED:

one packet each of: birdhouse gourds, yard-long runner beans, walking- stick cabbages, and 'Dill's Giant' pumpkins	one 5-by-10-ft. grid of 10-gauge concrete- reinforcing wire
flour (for marking)	six tent stakes
twine	two 40-pound bags of aged manure
five 8-foot-long 2-by-2-in. poles	hammer, shovel, various common garden tools
50 feet of thin rope	straw (for flooring) organic fertilizer (fish emulsion)

Using flour and a string tied to a stick, mark a five-foot-diameter circle on a flat 15-by-15-foot area that gets six to eight hours of sun per day. Tie the poles together by knotting some twine around them about a foot from the ends. Stand them up and spread the free ends outward to touch the circle, to make a tepee. The two poles that face south will be the door. Weave the rope in and out of the poles around the tepee. The ropes will support the bean and gourd vines. The rows of rope should be about 8 inches apart. (Don't block the door!)

Make the tunnel by bending the concrete-reinforcing wire to form a 3-foot-wide, 10-foot long arch. Put the tunnel in place in front of the door (see illustration). Hammer the tent stakes over the bottom edges of the wire to keep it in place. Dig a 12-inch-wide bed along each side of the tunnel and a 4-foot-wide bed around the tepee. Work in three inches of aged manure (compost, too, if you can). Spread straw on the tepee floor.

You're ready to plant

Plant when temperatures remain above 70 degrees F. Soak the gourd seeds for 24 hours just before planting. At the base of each pole, make a 6-inch-high, 12-inch-wide mound of soil. Poke two holes into this mound, about an inch deep. Drop a gourd seed into each hole, cover with soil, and water well.

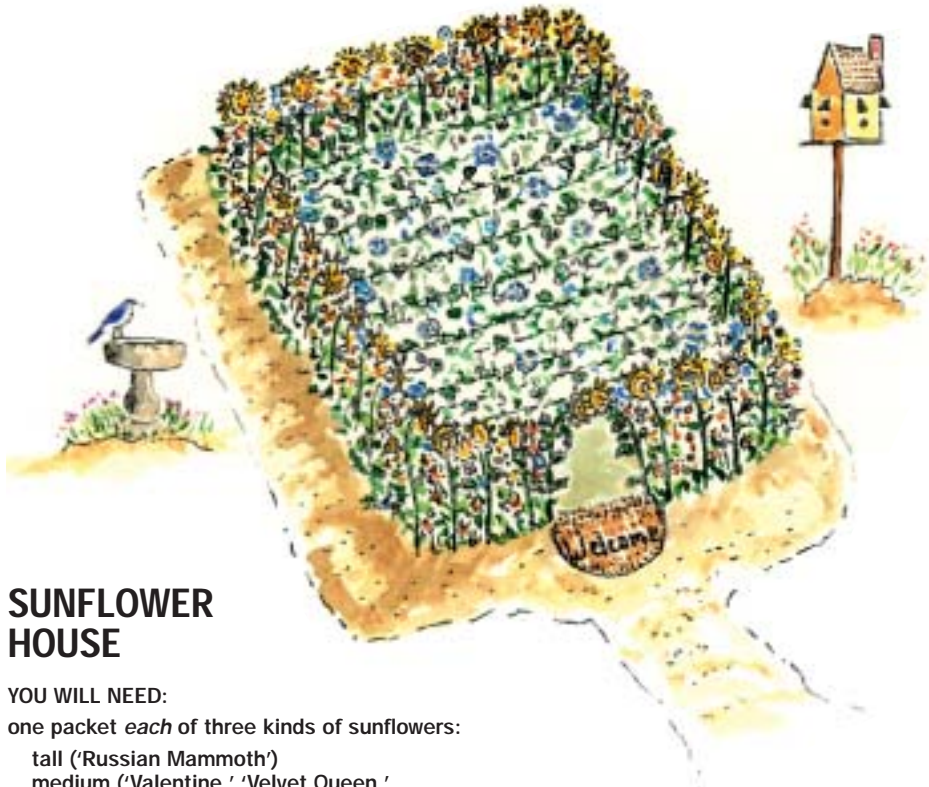
Make a one-inch-deep trench along the base of the tunnel on either side. Drop in a bean seed every four inches, cover with soil, and water thoroughly. On the east side of the tepee, plant walking-stick cabbage seeds about one inch deep and one foot apart. On the west side, make two more mounds (as above) and plant the pumpkin seeds: four seeds about an inch deep in each mound. Cover the seeds and water thoroughly.

Take good care of your garden

These plants need lots of water. Every day, poke your finger into the soil near each plant. If it's dry, water thoroughly. A soaker hose is a good way to water, because it prevents the leaves from getting mildew. Feed weekly with liquid seaweed or fish emulsion.

When the pumpkin vines are about 10 inches long, pull out the smallest ones. Allow only two pumpkins to grow on each vine, and they will become giants! When the gourd vines reach the top of the tepee, snip the top to produce thicker growth around the tepee. Be careful not to step on the roots of the vines. When the cabbage stalks are two inches thick, start stripping off the lower leaves.

For detailed instructions, and ideas for what you can do with your plants, see Sharon Lovejoy's 'Roots, Shoots, Buckets, and Boots.'



SUNFLOWER HOUSE

YOU WILL NEED:

one packet *each* of three kinds of sunflowers:

- tall ('Russian Mammoth')
- medium ('Valentine,' 'Velvet Queen,' or 'Evening Sun')
- short ('Elf' or 'Sundance Kid')

one packet of 'Heavenly Blue' morning glories

40-pound bag of composted manure

straw or bark mulch

Choose a location sheltered from the wind that gets six or more hours of sun each day. Lay out a 6-by-9-foot rectangle. The long sides should run north-south. For best results, dig a 6-inch-wide planting trench and work a 40-pound bag of well-rotted manure into the soil before planting the seeds. (Leave a space for the door!)

Sow the morning glory seeds around the rectangle as well. The vines will climb up the sunflowers. When the sunflowers grow tall enough, string some twine between the sunflowers for the morning glories to climb on. They will form a lacy 'roof.' Spread straw or shredded bark mulch on the 'floor' of your house.

In midsummer, visit your sunflower house with a flashlight at night. You may be able to watch moths sip nectar from the sunflowers.

Note to parents and teachers

'GARDENING is caught, not taught,' says gardening expert and author Sharon Lovejoy. Two of her books – "Roots, Shoots, Buckets, and Boots" (Workman Publishing, 1999) and "Sunflower Houses" (Workman, 2001) – contain a bumper crop of ideas for turning kids on to gardening.

Her advice to parents and teachers: Communicate your passion, not your know-how, to children. Use the "Hey, look at this!" approach. If a child isn't interested in gardening, 99 percent of the time it's because he or she hasn't been exposed to the wonder of it, Ms. Lovejoy says.

Lovejoy grew up playing in her grandmother's large garden, but the garden she tended herself was modest. Keep children's gardens small, and make sure the plants in it are appropriate to the site. (Consult local nurseries.) Note sun and water requirements. Organic fertilizers are safest: Seaweed or fish emulsion stinks at first, but kids seem to like that, Lovejoy says. Don't spray chemicals, as children tend to nibble in the garden.

Find out what kinds of plants your kids are most interested in. Do they want to try to attract hummingbirds? Grow something weird? Most kids enjoy growing something very large, like pumpkins. Don't forget plants that are fun to touch or smell.

Lovejoy strongly recommends giving budding gardeners an "explorer's kit" that might include a magnifying glass, a notebook (for observations and drawings), a sheet of Plexiglas so kids can look at the underside of insects (put the bugs on top), a

stethoscope for listening to plants drinking, a "catch and release" canning jar with nylon screening across the top, a measuring tape, a camera, and a flashlight for nocturnal exploring.

Explore with your children, Lovejoy urges. They probably won't do it on their own.

Teachers and home-schoolers can find ideas for lesson plans at Lovejoy's website: www.sharonlovejoy.com

**COMMUNICATE YOUR
PASSION, NOT YOUR
KNOW-HOW, TO CHILDREN,
THIS EXPERT SUGGESTS.**

TODAY'S ARTICLE ON CHRISTIAN SCIENCE

Bringing a spiritual perspective to daily life

Sexual abuse – a license to hate?

EVEN WHILE WRITING ABOUT it today, the memory is distasteful. I was a preteen sitting in the back seat of a car, parked in the business center of our small town.

Several adults were in the car, visiting. The older man beside me began touching me inappropriately. It was dark, and my father, who was sitting on the other side of the man, had no idea what was happening. I was too naive and embarrassed to stop him or to say anything. I hated that man for many years. When we would drive past his house, I'd always look the other way.

This is the first time I've told anyone what happened so long ago. I no longer hate the man, but I spent too many years feeling a legitimate, but corrosive, hatred for him. This experience, minor compared to what others have suffered, has given me great compassion for young people who have experienced sexual abuse.

I know how violated one feels, and how that violation is enhanced when the offender is part of one's own church community. While this man was not an official of the church but an occasional attendee, he was part of the community church group where I had felt totally safe.

Today, as one scandal of sex abuse after another is uncovered, there is a great hope that better ways to protect children will be found and implemented.

Hateful retaliation doesn't make a helpful contribution to the solution of this problem, nor does an ignorant belief that the offender will not repeat the offense. That sexual abuse is recognized not only as a sin to be overcome and forgiven but also as a crime to be punished is a most needed, progressive step. There is, however, an even greater need to address the climate where sexual images and titillation are pervasive.

Monitor founder Mary Baker Eddy authored a book that exposes root causes of transgressions of all kinds as it offers hope and a way for their abolishment. In "Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures," she wrote, "Selfishness and sensualism are educated in mortal mind by the thoughts ever recurring to one's self, by conversation about the body, and by the expectation of perpetual pleasure or pain from it; and this education is at the expense of spiritual growth" (pg. 260).

Failing to recognize our spiritual nature, we may conclude that one is simply an animal, selfishly devoted to fulfilling physical wants. Turning even partially away from such materialistic views moves thought to a more moral reckoning of humankind. No longer engrossed in physical wants and woes, one is led to investigate his or her higher nature, which corresponds with the immutable nature of God. Recognizing God to be Love itself reveals our nature as filled with unselfed love rather than with selfishness.

While selfishness and sensualism are "partners in crime," affection and temperance, both moral qualities, are natural. These qualities are not responsive to immoral impulses that harm the innocent and cause the loathing that is so detrimental to happiness.

The Biblical writer who stated that God is love also wrote, "He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and

there is none occasion of stumbling in him" (1 John 2:10). Love for others and selfishness cannot dwell together; love and respect for one-

self cannot abide sensualism. Divine Love, reflected and lived, is demanding a purer humanhood.

While sexual offenses in the Roman Catholic Church fill headlines today, we are not unaware that such offenses occur in other churches and in secular organizations entrusted with the care of children. As these groups – as all of us – face up to pedophilia, many questions are rightly debated. Does zero tolerance exclude forgiveness and healing? When, if ever, can a sex offender again be in a position to work with children? How can people in authority be more alert to the damage done by cover-ups?

Such questioning serves to better protect the innocent. Yet the ultimate and permanent remedy for sexual abuse lies in the hearts and thoughts of each of us. Cleansing consciousness of sensual impulses, sometimes demanded minute-by-minute, also helps cleanse the mental atmosphere in which we all live.

Such a purified atmosphere not only reduces the heinous possibilities of child molestation but also revokes the license one might feel to hate the molester.

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contribution.**

Finding
certainty
in
uncertain
times



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