



Mortimer's first garden

Little Mortimer Mouse looked outside. "Brown, brown, brown," he squeaked. "Nothing but brown! Too dull, too drab, too dreary!"

Mortimer longed to see something green. Anything green.

"Well, at least I have these!" He nibbled the shell off one of three sunflower seeds he had saved. "Nothing is as good as sunflower seeds," he said.

Just then the big people came into the room. One of them said, "*Children, it's springtime. What time is that?*"

"Garden time!" shouted the children.

Munch, munch, munch. Mortimer nibbled his treat.

"What's a garden?" he wondered.

"Do you all have your seeds?"

"Yes!"

Mortimer perked up his ears. "Seeds?" he squeaked. Anything about seeds could be tasty.

Mortimer nibbled the shell off his second seed.

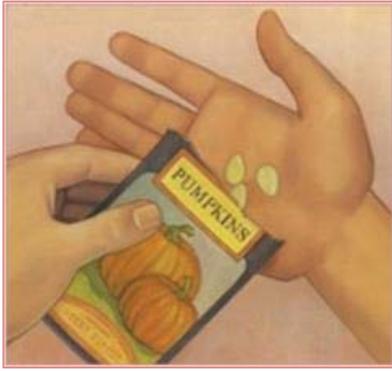
Munch, munch, munch. Delicious!



"Everybody look at your seeds. They are small. But imagine, we can put them in the dirt and with a little water and sunshine they will grow, grow, grow! One small seed turns into many more seeds or vegetables! It's a springtime miracle!"

Mortimer giggled at the thought. "I don't believe a word of it! Seeds are for eating. Who would throw perfectly good food in the dirt?"

He picked up his last seed and looked at it. "But what if the miracle is true?" Mortimer wondered. "Can one little seed turn into many?"



"Let's go plant seeds, and soon everything will be green!"

"Green?" thought Mortimer. That settled it. "I will plant my sunflower seed!" he said.

Mortimer searched and searched for the right place. "I need somewhere the sun will shine. And somewhere I can get water." Then Mortimer saw it.

The perfect spot.

Mortimer dug and dug and dug.

He held up his precious seed. It looked delicious. But Mortimer dropped the seed into the dirt anyway.

"I hope the miracle comes true," he said, patting soil carefully around the seed. Then he found an acorn cap and lugged over capfuls of water from a small puddle of melted snow.

"Phew. Gardening is hard work!"

Mortimer looked at his garden. Nothing but brown dirt. He looked up. The sky was gray.

"We'll see," he said.



In the morning Mortimer woke up to *pitter, patter, pat, pat.*

"Rain!" groaned Mortimer. Out in his garden he found brown, soggy dirt.

Mortimer stomped his paw. "Nothing! I knew the miracle wouldn't happen."

"I'm going to dig my seed back up and eat it!" Mortimer said. But then he stopped. "Maybe the miracles need more time."

He looked up at the sky and down to his seed. "Please grow and turn green," he said.

The next morning Mortimer woke up to ... *pitter, patter, pat, pat.*

"Oh, no. Rain again!" he said.

Outside Mortimer found brown, soggy dirt!

"No, no, no!" squeaked Mortimer. "This won't do! My seed will never grow. How much time do miracles take anyway?" cried Mortimer. "If I don't dig up my seed now, it might rot in all this rain."

But a gentle, quiet voice said, "Wait."

"Who was that?" whispered Mortimer.

"Wait" said the voice again. Only it wasn't just a voice. It was a feeling in Mortimer's heart.

Suddenly, even though he was drenched with rain, Mortimer felt warm and protected. Then Mortimer knew the voice.

Mortimer bowed his head. "I will wait, God. But please, make my seed grow."

And Mortimer waited.



On the third morning Mortimer woke to a light in his eyes. Sunshine! Bold and bright and beautiful!

Mortimer scampered outside and found **GREEN!**

Where his seed had been buried, two tiny green leaves poked up through the earth.

Mortimer danced and Mortimer pranced. He skipped around and around the tiny plant.

"My garden!" he cried. "My miracle! Thank you, God!"

Then he stopped. His plant was so small. And what was that next to it? A weed! Mortimer plucked the weed and watered the baby plant.



And every day after, Mortimer checked his garden.

He weeded, he watered, and he waited ... and waited... and waited.

And in the summer warmth the tiny seed continued to grow...

... and grow...



...and grow...

Until one day in his garden Mortimer found...

YELLOW!

A giant sunflower had bloomed. Bold and bright and beautiful, just like the sun.

Up, up, up climbed Mortimer. Down, down, down he looked. Mortimer felt as if he could see forever!

"My sunflower!" cried Mortimer. "It *is* a miracle! Thank you, God!"

Soon the sunflower was heavy with seeds.



"Hundreds of seeds," squeaked Mortimer. "All from just one. I've never seen such a wonder!"

He plucked each of the seeds and lugged them home to store away.

That night Mortimer cozied down into a bed of seeds and smiled. He stretched and yawned.

"Thank you, God, for my first garden," Mortimer said, looking at his bountiful pile.

There were plenty of seeds to eat, plenty of seeds to plant next spring, and even a few to share.

"And please, God," Mortimer prayed, "I wouldn't mind a friend to help me eat these."



And Mortimer fell fast asleep.

