

## My Dead Garden

### Poetry and Activity



## **My Dead Garden**

I beg your pardon,  
But this is my garden.

Filled with weeds  
And many old seeds.

All over the yard there are dirt patches  
Where my dog always scratches.

There are dead flowers  
That I planted for hours.

The backyard furniture is very dusty.  
I leave it out all year so it's very rusty.

There are no leaves on the trees.  
I get such a nice breeze.

The trees are dead and very tall,  
And I'm not sure when they may fall.

So, get out of my yard!  
As you can see, I work very hard.

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## **My Dead Garden**

**(Grade Level: First Grade – Second Grade)**

**Materials:** Overhead Projector, copies of poem for students, resealable plastic bags, cardboard or construction paper, glue and crayons. *Please bring one or two of the following items for students to touch and see: Potpourri, dried flower arrangement, dried holiday arrangement or a wreath, etc.*

**Goal of Activity:** The rhyming poem can be used as an additional resource to reinforce rhyming words and sharpen listening skills. Students will collaborate to turn outside objects into art and they will also learn about seasonal changes in the natural environment.

- 1. Picture Walk:** First, using your overhead projector, begin with a picture walk. Ask students what they see in the picture. For example, ask “*What do you see in the picture? Or, does this look like a garden? What’s wrong with this picture? What should a garden look like?*” These are sample prompts to get students’ brain power turned on.
- 2. Discuss Title:** Ask students about the title of the poem and what they think it may mean. Encourage students to engage in discussion about gardens they have seen.
  - Talk to students about the dried arrangement or other object(s) that you brought in. Explain what it is used for.
  - For example, if you brought in a dried floral arrangement, you could discuss its use. You might explain, many people use these to decorate their homes, offices, restaurants, classrooms, etc.
  - Tell students the next time they go to a doctor’s office, restaurant or a relative’s home that they should notice if there is a dried arrangement there.
  - Collect the item(s) that you brought in.
- 3. Pass Out Copies of Poem:** Ask a student to pass out the poem. As they are distributing the poem remind students that “My Dead Garden” is a rhyming poem and they will need to listen closely. Also explain that rhymes in a poem are always at the end of the line.

4. **Read Poem:** Once students have a copy, read “*My Dead Garden*” to and ask them to follow along with you. At the end of each line pause for a few seconds.
  - When you have finished reading the poem, have students read along with you the second time.
  
5. **Poem Discussion:** Ask students what the poem is about. For example a student may say, “The poem is about weeds, dirt patches and dead leaves.” ***Here are a few sample questions you may use to get their brainpower juice flowing:***
  - Ask students about the item(s) you brought in for them to see and touch:
  - Can dried plants be beautiful?
  - Do your parents have dried plants at home?
  - Have you seen a wreath made of dried plants or sticks?
  - Why is the owner of “My Dead Garden” proud of it?
  
6. **Circle Rhyming Words:** Ask a student to read two lines of the poem and have him or her name the rhyming words.
  - Ask another student the meaning of the rhyming words. For example, “What is a seed and a weed? What could they be used for.”
  - Continue around the room asking students to read two lines and explain the meaning of the words.
  
  - Circle the rhyming words along with your students on your transparency, if you decided to use an Overhead Projector.
  - Ask your students to say other words that rhyme with the circled words.
  
7. **Class or Small Group Activity:** Now, it’s time for students to go outside and collect items to make their own “gardens.”
  - Take your students outside with their resealable bags. Or, if there is no natural environment nearby, have them go to an area of the classroom where a selection of natural objects have been assembled for them.
  - Ask your students to collect what they would like to include in their gardens. Tell them that they can each choose two or three small sticks, fall leaves, dry grasses, pine cones, acorns, dry mosses, or even interesting rocks!
  - The students can collaborate as a class or small groups to make their gardens. If you decided to use small groups have them work at a table

- with glue, crayons, cardboard or construction paper. Students may want to use crayons to create a background for objects.
- Tell the students to share what they found with their group, and to work together to make a garden, gluing the natural objects to the cardboard or construction paper.
  - When the project is completed have each student explain why their gardens look the way they do, and what they like about their gardens!
  - Display the gardens with a copy of the poem and illustration in the classroom or in an assigned display area.

**\*\* “My Dead Garden” Activity Completed: Ask students to give themselves a pat on the back and kiss their brains! Great work today! \*\***