February Insects

The gardener, of course, will look after his gardens.
But he is also a caretaker for all living things.
He does all he can to avoid harming those animals that occupy his space.
The gardener does not use any chemicals whatsoever that might suppress growth in his garden.

That's why insects exist – they rustle about night and day.
In the clearings, at the edges of woods, in the crop garden, among the flowers, in the grass and in the trees – they fly about everywhere.



We hear the shrill of crickets and locusts, especially during high summer, as well as the squealing buzz of the cicadas and the engine sound of Lucas insects and rose chafers at dusk.

Flies, gadflies, bugs, wasps and bees are buzzing. And don't forget those irritating mosquitoes!
Only butterflies and ichneumon wasps remain unobtrusive. They are not heard; they are seen.

We are astonished by their beauty, yet we do not grasp why they display such a vast array of colors and shapes.
We venture to guess why these flying insects only survive for such a short period of time. They take on this elegant form for only part of their lives.
The dancing flight of the newly hatched Vanessa butterfly, with its red and black ochre shades, is part of the final journey of its life. She has wings to find a mate in this field of flowers.
Before hatching, however, she was an earthbound caterpillar grazing on the nearest leaves at hand.
What a transformation!

The gardener would love to possess the magic powers of insects: the agility of an Old World swallowtail butterfly, the swiftness of a sphynx moth and the serenity of a blowfly hovering from one side of the field to the other without flapping its wings.
He would like to have a shielded breastplate like the beetles, with their skeleton on the outside. Then, there would then be no need for boots, aprons, hats and gloves to protect his fragile skin from the sun's rays.
Above all, though, the gardener would love to fly slowly and look at the countryside from above, using only air as his support. For air, in fact, is not just empty space: it can support a flying creature.

Nothing is immaterial in the eyes of the gardener.
And nothing is more solid when it comes to the flying insect.

Where is number 7?

April Bloom



Flowers come in all shapes and colors.

So remarkable and easy to arrange, they provide inspiration to many a botanist (or plant scientist). Botanists have categorized plants – each and every one of them – into families according to the shapes of their flowers.

The legume species papilionaceae (nowadays fabaceae), which includes sweet peas and beans, has flowers that look like butterflies' wings.
Umbelliferes (nowadays apiaceous) include carrots and fennel, and their flowers resemble an umbrella.
A crucifer (nowadays brassicaceae), such as Dame's rocket or mustard, produces a four-petalled flower in the shape of a cross.

A composite (nowadays asteraceae) is a plant with multiple flowers that are assembled to look like a single blossom.

Daisies are the best-known asters, because we like to pluck them when singing 'She loves me, she loves me not ...'

The composite blossom of a daisy contains two distinct flower types: the small flowers that make up the round center and the long, petal-shaped flowers that decorate the edge. Composites radiate so vividly, they remind us of the sun or the stars. That's why we call them asters.

The gardener keeps an eye on the stars. His gardening schedule is linked to the course of the stars, the moon and the sun.

The gardener loves composite flowers because they depend on the stars, sun and moon.

Which gardener watches the stars?

July Sun

The gardener works the soil.

He understands the importance of the soil – its richness, its being. However, he does not see all the remarkable things that happen underground to make plant growing possible.
One day, he would like to visit this concealed world.

There, he could discover in full astonishment how the roots intertwine like a labyrinth or an obstacle course. He would understand how the roots of different plants have their own space, growing and co-existing here without contact ...

He would also learn how some plants achieve mastery over others.
How is it that one species can frighten another and cause it to move away, without even budging from its own place in the ground?
It is said that the hawkweed emits poison from the end of its roots to fend off grass ...
It is also said that leeks like strawberries ...

Our gardener would see a diversity of plant forms. He is familiar with some of the things he harvests: the smooth round onion, for example.
He knows the roughness of the beetroot, the well-anchored stem of the carrot and the full surface of the leek.
He also understands the variable shapes of potatoes: their false roots and swollen stems, their edible tubers hidden in the soil.

If the land is alive and well, and if the gardener has not dumped chemicals that may harm it, then he can see a wealth of animal life in his garden: friendly earthworms and moth chrysalises, as well as the less cherished grubs and snail eggs.

Using a microscope, he can also see a billion bacteria.

In other words, all that gives life is visible in a garden.

Can you spot carrots, leeks, potatoes and beetroots in the garden?
Do you see a gemstone?



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 skunk doing in the field?
Can you find him?