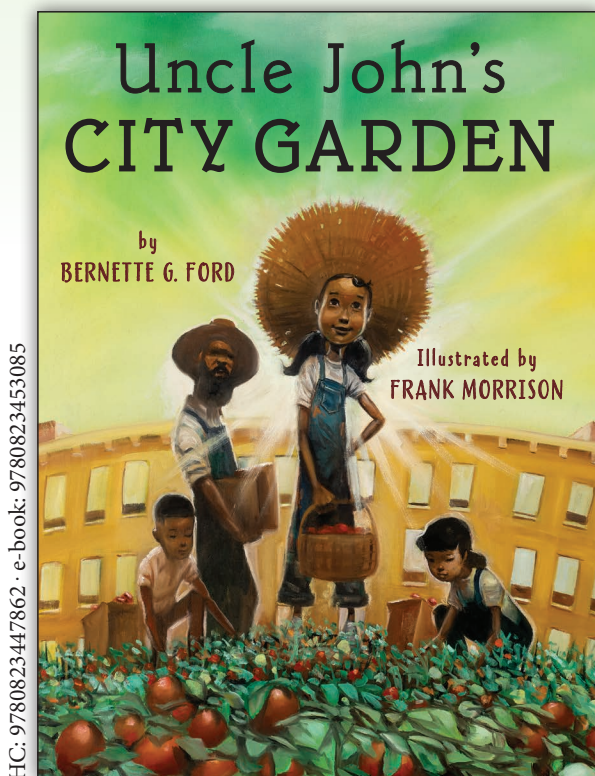


# HOLIDAY HOUSE EDUCATOR'S GUIDE



## Uncle John's City Garden

by **Bernette Ford**

illustrated by **Frank Morrison**

★ “Delightful . . . inviting . . . a fine example of using everyday life to exemplify science and success. A joy to experience.”—*Booklist*, Starred Review

### ABOUT THE BOOK

How does this city garden grow? With help from Li'l Sissy and her siblings—and love, love, love! A celebration of nature, family, and food.

Visiting the city from her home in the suburbs, an African American girl sees how a few packets of seeds, some helping hands, and hard work transform an empty lot in a housing project into a magical place where vegetables grow and family gathers. It's the magic of nature in the heart of the city!

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Setting is when and where a book takes place. Study the cover of the book. How do the title of the book and the cover illustration reveal the setting?
- Why do people call Uncle John's garden “the garden”? What is a garden plot? Look at the illustration on pages 6 and 7. How is “the garden” a plot before it becomes a garden?
- Li'l Sissy is telling the story. Take a clue from the first page of text and point out Li'l Sissy in the illustration. Who is the oldest child? Point out the middle child.
- Explain how the garden tools the children and Uncle John use vary in size. Why would it be difficult for the children to use the same size tools that Uncle John uses? Discuss the following simile that describes Uncle John's shovel: “His was as tall as brother” (p. 9). Think of a simile that would best describe Li'l Sissy's shovel.



- Uncle John allows the children to choose the seeds they want to plant. Draw a connection between the seeds Li'l Sissy chooses and the illustration on the cover of the book. The story says what seeds the children plant, but it doesn't say what Uncle John plants.
- Suggest vegetables that Uncle John might grow. The children's mother says they are growing "succotash." Study the recipe for succotash at the end of the book. How does the recipe explain their mom's statement?
- Discuss the planting process. How does Uncle John prepare the children's rows for planting? A garden takes a lot of work. Describe the daily work the children do to help their plants grow.
- Study the illustration on pages 12 and 13 and describe the storm. How does the illustrator paint wind and rain? What do you think Li'l Sissy is thinking when she looks at the storm from her window?
- Define harvest. What does Uncle John teach the children about harvesting their vegetables? Notice the illustration on pages 14 and 15. The children and Uncle John appear to be walking in step with one another. How does this suggest teamwork?
- Discuss the family gathering at the end of the summer. Why are the grown-ups seated at the smallest table? What do the children learn about sharing?
- Describe the last illustration in the book. What are Uncle John and the children looking at? Explain what they see. Why does Uncle John have his arms around the children?

Guide created by Pat Scales, retired school librarian and independent consultant, Greenville, South Carolina.

## ABOUT THE CREATORS



**Bernette Ford** (1950–2021) is the coauthor of the groundbreaking bestseller *Bright Eyes, Brown Skin*. She is also author of the bestselling Ballet Kitty series, *No More Diapers for Ducky*, and for Holiday House, *First Snow*. *Uncle John's City Garden*, inspired by her uncle's urban garden, is published by Holiday House.



**Frank Morrison** was a graffiti artist and break dancer before becoming a children's book illustrator. Frank has won a Coretta Scott King–John Steptoe Award, a Coretta Scott King Illustrator Award, a Coretta Scott King Illustrator Honor, an NAACP Image Award, and a Society of Illustrators Original Art Silver Medal. *Uncle John's City Garden* is his first book for Holiday House.

