



TEACHER GUIDE

The Night the Garden Went Quiet

by *Becky Fry*

A read-aloud and cross-curricular guide for grades K-3

Explore observation, pollinators, seasonal bloom cycles, habitats, problem-solving, and the power of careful listening.

ABOUT THIS GUIDE

Maya Marigold knows the sounds of Grandmother Marigold's garden. When the garden suddenly goes quiet, she investigates what changed. With Bumble, Ruby Throat, Mina Moonmoth, and Grandmother Marigold, Maya discovers that the pollinators are not lost - the garden has stopped offering enough blooms at the right times. Together they plan an "every-hour, every-season" garden with flowers, water, and shelter.

AT A GLANCE

GRADES	READ-ALOUD	FOCUS
K-3	25-35 min	ELA + Science
BIG IDEA	CORE SKILL	EXTENSION
Living things need resources	Observe, ask, investigate	Garden / schoolyard study

Essential Question

How can careful observation help us understand what living things need?

1. Learning Goals & Read-Aloud Plan

Use before, during, and after reading to guide inquiry without giving away the solution.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Retell the problem, key clues, solution, and outcome using beginning-middle-end language.
- Identify sensory and sound words that help readers imagine the garden.
- Explain that pollinators visit flowers for resources such as nectar and that different visitors may be active at different times.
- Describe how seasonal timing can create a "nectar gap" when too few flowers are blooming.
- Use observations and evidence from the story to make and revise predictions.
- Name simple habitat supports shown in the book: varied blooms, shallow water with landing stones, and plant material for shelter.

BEFORE READING - 5 MINUTES

Show the cover. Invite students to notice the girl, the garden, the moon, and the pollinators. Do not explain why the garden becomes quiet yet.

- What sounds might you expect to hear in a healthy garden?
- What do you think "went quiet" could mean?
- Which living things on the cover might depend on the flowers?
- What might a garden detective need to pay attention to?

DURING READING - PAUSE & PREDICT

Story Moment	Teacher Prompt
The familiar garden sounds disappear.	What is missing? What evidence tells Maya something has changed?
Bumble is found hiding in the watering can.	What might make an animal leave a place it usually visits?
Maya tries ribbons, a sign, paper flowers, humming, and a bell. Ruby later says the flowers finished.	Which ideas only signal or decorate? Which clue points to what pollinators actually need?
Mina explains the moonflowers opened early.	Why might day visitors and night visitors both be affected?
Grandmother shows the garden calendar.	What pattern do Maya and Grandmother notice across the seasons?

Read-Aloud Tip

Keep a simple class clue chart with three columns: What Maya Notices / What We Think / What We Learn. Revise ideas as the story provides new evidence.

2. Discussion Questions & Vocabulary

Build comprehension, inference, oral language, and science vocabulary.

AFTER-READING DISCUSSION

RECALL	What sounds did Maya know in the garden before it went quiet?
CAUSE & EFFECT	Why did the pollinators leave the Sunrise Patch?
EVIDENCE	Which clue helped Maya understand that the pollinators were not simply lost?
PROBLEM SOLVING	Why did the ribbons, sign, paper flowers, humming, and bell fail to solve the problem?
COMPARE	How were Bumble's needs and Mina Moonmoth's needs alike? How were they different?
SEQUENCE	What did Maya and Grandmother Marigold add to help the garden welcome visitors again?
THEME	What does Maya learn about listening - both to sounds and to evidence?
APPLY	What could we look for in our schoolyard or neighborhood to tell whether pollinators have what they need?

STORY VOCABULARY

Word	Kid-Friendly Meaning	Try This Prompt
pollinator	An animal that moves pollen as it visits flowers.	Name a pollinator in the story.
nectar	A sweet liquid made by flowers that some animals drink.	Which visitors are looking for nectar?
nectar gap	A time when too few flowers are blooming for hungry visitors.	What caused the gap in the Sunrise Patch?
bloom	To open as a flower.	Which flowers bloom at different times?
investigate	To look closely for clues and answers.	How does Maya investigate?
shelter	A protected place to rest or hide.	What shelter does Maya leave in the garden?
season	A part of the year with typical weather and changes.	Why does season matter for flowers?
observe	To notice carefully using your senses.	What does Maya observe first?

3. STEM Connections

Turn Maya's investigation into simple, age-appropriate science inquiry.

SCIENCE IDEAS IN THE STORY

Pollinators & Flowers

Visitors come to flowers for resources. The book features bees, butterflies, a hummingbird, and a moth as garden visitors.

Timing Matters

Different plants bloom at different points in the year. If many bloom and finish at once, later visitors may find too little food.

Day & Night

Some visitors are active during the day; Mina Moonmoth represents nighttime garden visitors and moonflowers that open after dark.

Habitat Is More Than Flowers

Maya also adds a shallow water dish with smooth landing stones and leaves dry stems and fallen leaves for shelter.

Evidence Changes Ideas

Maya's first solutions do not work. New clues from Bumble, Ruby, Mina, and the garden calendar help her revise her thinking.

MINI STEM ACTIVITY: MODEL A NECTAR GAP

Materials: 12 paper flower cards, 4 pollinator counters (or small blocks), and 4 labels: Spring / Early Summer / Late Summer / Fall.

- Round 1: Place most flower cards in Spring and Early Summer. Leave Late Summer nearly empty. Move the pollinator counters through the seasons and ask: Where is food easy to find? Where is it difficult?
- Round 2: Redistribute the flowers so some are available in every season. Repeat the pollinator journey.
- Compare: Which garden better supports visitors over time? What changed?
- Extension: Add a Day / Night label to selected flowers and include one nighttime pollinator counter.

OBSERVATION VS. INFERENCE

Observation - What Maya can notice

The flower stems are bare.

Bumble is hiding in the watering can.

The calendar shows blooms normally occur at different times.

Inference - What Maya thinks it might mean

The visitors may not have enough food.

He may be avoiding or searching for something.

This year's warm spring may have shifted the timing.

4. Classroom Activities

Choose one quick activity or build a weeklong inquiry around the book.

Garden Sound Map

10-15 min

Take students outside or near an open window. Sit quietly for one minute. Students place a dot in the center of paper for themselves and add simple symbols where they hear birds, insects, leaves, wind, footsteps, or human sounds. Compare maps.

Maya's Clue Sort

15 min

Write story clues on cards. Students sort them into "What Maya noticed," "What another character explained," and "What helped solve the problem."

Design an Every-Season Garden

20-30 min

Provide four boxes labeled spring, summer, fall, and night. Students draw or place flower pictures so the garden offers something at different times. Add a water source and a shelter area.

Pollinator Match-Up

15 min

Match Bumble, Ruby Throat, butterflies, and Mina Moonmoth to the kinds of flower shapes or times of day emphasized in the story. Then discuss why variety helps.

Failed Idea / Better Idea

15 min

Compare Maya's early attempts - signs, ribbons, paper flowers, humming, and a bell - with the later habitat changes. Ask students to explain which actions provide a real resource.

Listening Bench Journal

Ongoing

Create a classroom "Listening Bench" spot. Once a week, students record one thing they heard, one thing they saw, one thing that changed, and one new question.

WRITING & ART EXTENSIONS

- Write a new page for Maya's green notebook: "Today I noticed... I wonder... My next clue is..."
- Create a sound-word garden using original onomatopoeia for birds, insects, wind, rain, and leaves.
- Draw a day garden and a night garden. Label which visitors might use each one.
- Write a short "Welcome, Pollinators!" sign that tells visitors what the garden provides instead of merely pointing the way.

5. Extension Ideas & Quick Assessment

Use these options for home-school connections, enrichment, and evidence of learning.

CROSS-CURRICULAR EXTENSIONS

Math: Graph garden visitors observed over several days. Compare totals and talk about more / fewer / equal.

Art: Study flower shapes and create a class mural with blooms placed across seasons and times of day.

Writing: Write from Bumble's, Ruby Throat's, or Mina Moonmoth's point of view: What did the quiet garden feel like?

Library / Research: With teacher-selected nonfiction sources, compare one real pollinator to its role in the story.

Schoolyard Stewardship: Identify one realistic improvement for a school garden or container planter, such as adding a shallow water source or extending bloom times.

Family Connection: Invite students to complete a "What is blooming near me?" observation with an adult and bring back one drawing or note.

QUICK ASSESSMENT OPTIONS

- Exit Ticket: "The garden went quiet because _____. One thing Maya did to help was _____."
- Draw & Explain: Draw the Sunrise Patch after Maya and Grandmother improve it. Label at least three things that help visitors.
- Evidence Check: Give students four statements and ask which one is best supported by the story.
- Oral Retell: Students use four picture prompts - quiet garden / clues / garden calendar / visitors return - to retell the investigation.

SAMPLE SUCCESS CRITERIA

Beginning	Developing	Ready to Extend
Names one story problem or clue with support.	Explains the problem and gives one piece of evidence or one helpful habitat change.	Connects multiple clues to the solution and explains why timing and variety matter.

Teacher Note

The book presents an age-appropriate story model of pollinator needs and seasonal bloom timing. For detailed local planting recommendations or standards alignment, pair the story with region-specific educational resources selected by your school or district.

ONE-SENTENCE TAKEAWAY

Good garden detectives listen closely, notice patterns, and change their ideas when new evidence appears.