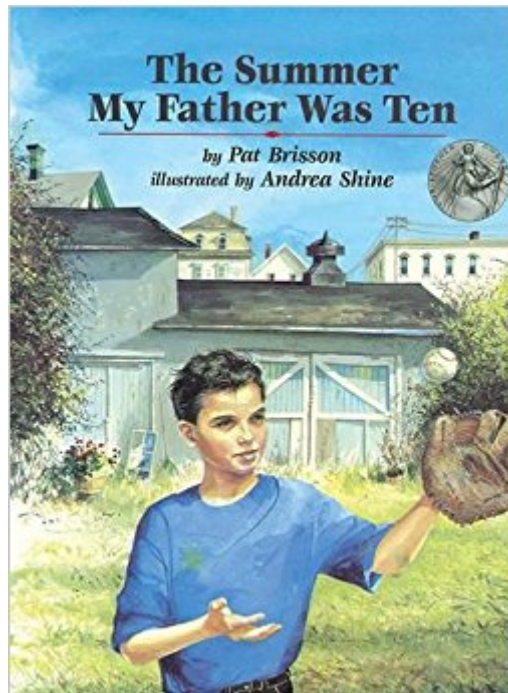




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# The Summer My Father Was Ten



## Synopsis

Every year my father and I plant a garden. Tomatoes, peppers, onions, marigold, and zinnias grow in neat, straight rows...and every spring my father tells me about Mr. Bellavista and the summer my father was ten. -From the book. That was the summer the boy lost a baseball under a tomato plant in Mr. Bellavista's garden. And someone tossed a tomato back instead of the baseball. A lively battle took place, which seemed like great fun at the time, but in the end Mr. Bellavista's garden had been destroyed. In a touching story of one boy's efforts to make amends, we see the rebuilding of a garden and the forming of a relationship across generations. With luminous, beautifully detailed watercolors, the artist has captured both the sadness and the quiet joy woven throughout the tale.

## Book Information

Lexile Measure: 1040L (What's this?)

Paperback: 32 pages

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Average Customer Review: 4.8 out of 5 stars 19 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #221,570 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #41 in Books > Children's Books > Education & Reference > Science Studies > Nature > Gardening #532 in Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Family Life > Multigenerational #686 in Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Family Life > Parents

Age Range: 5 - 7 years

Grade Level: Kindergarten - 2

## Customer Reviews

Kindergarten-Grade 2?Every spring a girl and her father plant their garden. This shared time is, in turn, the catalyst for the man to recount once again the summer he was 10, a story readers hear through the words of his daughter. He had a neighbor who carefully tended his garden through the day and listened to opera music in the evening. A game of baseball that her father and his friends were playing turned into an afternoon of destruction when the ball landed in the garden and led to the boys throwing every tomato, onion, and pepper that they could get their hands on. The neighbor

could only ask, "Why?" The child's father said he was remorseful and volunteered to help the old man the next summer, leading to a long friendship and his own love of gardening. Full-page watercolors depict a quaint seaside village while jeans and sneakers worn by the daughter set the story in the present day. Unfortunately, the faces are not well illustrated and the aftermath of the ruin of the garden seems a bit too impressionistically genteel. Teachers looking for a supplemental title on facing the consequences of one's behavior may find this useful, but it's unlikely to get requests for repeated readings. Susan Pine, New York Public Library Copyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Ages 4<sup>+</sup>-8. Growing a garden is fact and metaphor in this profoundly moving cross-generational story with a neighborhood drama that children will relate to and exquisite watercolors that celebrate renewal and connection. A young girl tells how every year she and her father plant a garden together, and every year he tells her the story of the summer he was 10 when he led his mates in vandalizing the garden of his lonely, old Italian neighbor, Mr. Bellavista ("Spaghetti Man" the kids call him). The damage isn't deliberate; their baseball lands in the plants, and suddenly the boys are having a glorious time splattering tomatoes and peppers and tearing things up. Afterwards, Mr. Bellavista says only one word, "Why?" Next year, he doesn't plant anything. The guilt-stricken boy apologizes, and together, he and Mr. Bellavista clear, dig, plant, and grow things. Until he dies, the solitary immigrant is friends with the boy's small family. No messages are spelled out. As in Shine's illustrations for Diller's *Big Band Sound* (1997), the large double-page spreads of people and neighborhood burst with light and movement. The personal narrative voice, the heartfelt characters, and the daily gardening work--weeding, watering, watching--are celebrated in the gorgeously detailed pictures that show how a garden transforms a vacant lot. Hazel Rochman --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

This is an amazing story to share with students to show them how we can turn our mistakes into some of life's greatest moments. In this story, a child retells the story of her father's youth when an impromptu baseball game gets out of hand and some unthinking boys end up destroying an old man's garden. One boy, the father, regrets his actions but struggles with how to make amends. When he finally works up the nerve to approach the old man, it is the beginning of a beautiful relationship that lasts the rest of the old man's life.

Great story and what a great lesson! The lesson he learned will transcend generations.. This is

classic! A must read for everyone.

I would recommend this book for 2-4 graders. 20 second graders sat glued to this book as I read it to them today! It was so enjoyable to watch the various reactions to different parts of the story. This story drives home how our actions effect other people and is done in a very sweet way. I am thrilled I bought this book, and I will enjoy reading this to children for many years.

My third graders loved this story and what a great writing springboard about lessons learned and mistakes made right! It let's the kids know we all have stories to tell, some good & some not so good! I love happy endings!

excellent book for whole family. wonderful message. read it to my grandchildren and gave them flower seeds, zinnias, to plant with their father. great book for teachers to read to students in class.

Great book to teach narrative writing to my students.

Perfect story. My favorite of all time It's about forgiveness and mistakes. Life and death love and work it's perfect

I love this book! Such a touching story that shows a great example of good character!

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