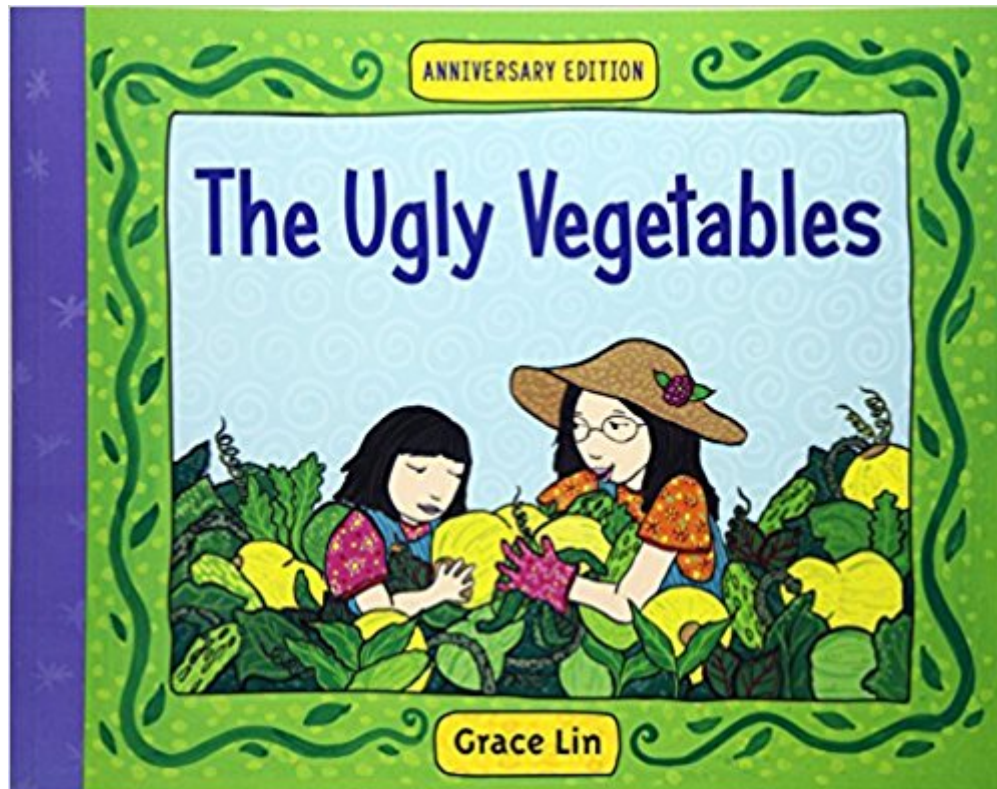




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# The Ugly Vegetables



## Synopsis

It's easy to appreciate a garden exploding with colorful flowers and fragrances, but what do you do with a patch of ugly vegetables? Author/illustrator Grace Lin recalls such a garden in this charming and eloquent story. The neighbors' gardens look so much prettier and so much more inviting to the young gardener than the garden of "black-purple-green vines, fuzzy wrinkled leaves, prickly stems, and a few little yellow flowers" that she and her mother grow. Nevertheless, mother assures her that "these are better than flowers." Come harvest time, everyone agrees as those ugly Chinese vegetables become the tastiest, most aromatic soup they have ever known. As the neighborhood comes together to share flowers and ugly vegetable soup, the young gardener learns that regardless of appearances, everything has its own beauty and purpose. **THE UGLY VEGETABLES** springs forth with the bright and cheerful colors of blooming flowers and bumpy, ugly vegetables. Grace Lin's colorful, playful illustrations pour forth with abundant treasures. Complete with a guide to the Chinese pronunciation of the vegetables and the recipe for ugly vegetable soup! Try it . . . you'll love it, too!

## Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.8 out of 5 stars 36 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #54,275 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #28 in [Books > Children's Books > Geography & Cultures > Multicultural Stories > Asian & Asian American](#) #274 in [Books > Reference > English as a Second Language](#) #1986 in [Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Family Life](#)

Age Range: 4 - 8 years

Grade Level: Preschool - 3

## Customer Reviews

In this debut children's book, a girl and her mother chart their own course in spring planting. And

reap the benefits. The girl narrator is clearly disappointed when, unlike her neighbors who prepare flower gardens, she and her mother plant Chinese vegetables that, her mother insists, are "better than flowers." While the other backyards yield colorful blooms, her garden becomes crowded with "ugly vegetables," lumpy, bumpy and "icky yellow." But when the girl's mother uses them to make a soup, its "magical aroma" attracts neighbors to their door. Carrying bouquets of flowers from their gardens. Though the pacing of the text is a bit uneven, the mother's confidence in the garden's success and Lin's message of community togetherness buoy up the narrative. A charming, childlike quality infuses the artwork; boldly hued gouache pictures feature skies and lawns as patterned as the girl's kitchen wallpaper and curtains. For ambitious young gardeners and would-be chefs, an illustrated glossary of the vegetables and their Chinese characters along with a soup recipe conclude the volume. Ages 3-8. (July) Copyright 1999 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

Kindergarten-Grade 3 A Chinese-American girl and her mother grow a vegetable garden in a neighborhood where everyone else grows flowers. The girl thinks their plants are ugly compared to flowers, but soon learns that vegetables can make a very delicious soup one that the whole neighborhood wants to try. Soon everyone is growing Chinese vegetables as well as flowers. A recipe for "Ugly Vegetable Soup" is included. Lin's brightly colored gouache illustrations perfectly match her story, creating a patchwork-quilt effect as the neighbors' backyards all converge. Families of all kinds engage in all sorts of activities while children play happily together. Each double-page spread is a different color with a different pattern scattered lightly across it, serving as a frame for the illustrations and as background for the text. A lovely, well-formatted book with an enjoyable multicultural story. Judith Constantinides, East Baton Rouge Parish Main Library, LA Copyright 1999 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

I have had this book before and used it with the children in my classroom to celebrate Chinese New Year. I could not find it in my local library as I had before, so I checked on and, as always, they had the book. We read the book and then used the recipe in the back of the book to make a very tasty soup with the children ( great science, math, and prediction activities ). The results were just as I hoped they would be - a great hands-on learning experience. The children loved preparing the vegetables, predicting if these truly unusual-looking vegetables would taste good, and eating the soup. I recommend this book as a great teaching tool and a wonderful experience for children.

This book brings back memories for me as a Chinese girl growing up in Texas. Feeling different. Then appreciating my mother's vision and skills. The brightly colored illustrations are fun, and the story has been a wonderful jumping off point for conversations between my mother, my kids, and myself about culture and community. It's a family favorite.

The story tells of a little girl who helped her mom plant a Chinese vegetable garden. The little girl wished her mom would plant flowers like the joining neighbor's. The story shows how the daughter and neighbor's enjoyed the Chinese garden harvest -the soup that her mom cooked up. Then the following garden season, neighbors started growing Chinese vegetables too!

Each Grace Lin book I get, I am just so impressed by her talent! Every child loves to get their hands into dirt and growing flowers or vegetables is always fun and gives the child great pride to show everyone their hard work and or beautiful flowers! Every child wants to be just the same as their friends, especially those in the neighborhood. Mom and daughter start in the spring to plant their garden and while everyone else in the neighborhood each have their own way of tending their gardens totally different from how her and her mom garden. When their plants appear they look like grass, where other neighbors' appear they look like normal plants. The little girl constantly asks questions as all children do, why mommy, why mommy and her mommy patiently answers each of her daughters questions. When others in the neighborhood have beautiful flowers that smell so good, the little girl's garden has what she sees as ugly plants with no beautiful scents. Once the vegetables are ready to be harvested the little girl and mother gather their wheelbarrow with their vegetables. Later that afternoon the daughter is out playing in the yard and smells a wonderful smell and it's coming from her house! Her mom has made soup using their harvest and her mom gives her a bowl..... it tastes so good! Then there comes knocking at their door and it's the little girl's neighbors wanting to trade their beautiful flowers for a bowl of soup. The Mom tells the neighbors about each vegetable and the next spring the little girl notices her neighbors growing "Ugly Vegetables" too! I love that Lin includes a recipe to make using these so called "ugly vegetables" and that she included their names and even sounded them out. Keep up the good work Mrs. Lin and I'll keep on buying your books and singing praises to anyone who'll read my reviews!

This was a beautifully illustrated book and a wonderful lesson in gardening! My seven and four year old grandchildren enjoyed it very much. Both love to garden and even help with the weeding! (a PLUS)

love it. great paperback condition.

I was drawn to this book for several reasons. First off, I have a child born in and adopted from China and am naturally drawn to books relating to Chinese people. As much as I want her to understand her birth culture I am also learning at the same time. We have several Grace Lin books in our library at home and have loved everyone of them. What I love about this book is that it illustrates how we all have something to teach one another and that through our sharing and teaching we actually become comfortable with ourselves. This isn't just a book about some unusual vegetables, it's a story about people and what we each have to offer the world.

My daughter really enjoyed this book. I enjoyed the great vegetable soup recipe in the back of the book. Win win

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