Mary Mary Quite Contrary dumps a pile of dirt outside Oscar's trash can. Mary Mary says that she is going to grow a garden with silver bells and cockleshells. Gordon tries to tell her that silver bells and cockleshells aren't alive. Gardens need to have things growing in them, like vegetables, fruits, or flowers. Mary Mary decides she will grow flowers in her garden by using dirt, sun, and water. But Oscar doesn't like the beautiful garden! As Mary Mary plants more flowers, Oscar decides to have his elephant, Fluffy, squirt water at her. Maybe that will get her to move! But, as Mary Mary explains, the water helps her flowers to grow. Oscar doesn't know what to do! He sends over Hairy Hairy with stinky weeds and moldy seeds and three pigs, but even that doesn't get rid of Mary Mary and her garden. Suddenly, Oscar changes his mind. He likes the horrible smell from the stinky weeds and loud noises from the pigs. It's a grouch paradise!

What Grows Here?
Expand your child's knowledge of her natural surroundings by investigating the plants in your neighborhood. Together explore your backyard, garden, sidewalk, or nearby park. Talk about what kinds of trees and flowers you discover. Help her learn their names, such as oak and elm, and introduce new vocabulary words, such as root and trunk.

How Does My Garden Grow?
Let your child explore his creativity through drawing a fantasy garden. Provide him with various art materials (construction paper, markers, crayons, old magazines, etc.), and other things, such as leaves collected on a nature walk or recyclable materials from the home. Talk to him about his picture and the things that grow in his fantasy garden!

Gardening Words
Help your child learn new vocabulary words as she plants seeds in the garden. Together talk about the parts of a flower, such as buds, seeds, and petals. Then read The Ugly Vegetables by Grace Lin and discuss the little girl's feelings that her mother's garden is the ugliest in the neighborhood.

Counting, Counting
Present your child with a small set of identical or similar objects found in nature, such as five flowers or ten leaves, and encourage him to count each object. Encourage him to recognize that the last number reached while counting 1, 2, 3, 4, 5! Five flowers all together! Èis the total number of objects in the set.

Exploring Habitats
Develop your child's critical thinking skills by having her observe and ask questions. Walk around the neighborhood and study the habitats of the insects and animals you find. Ask your child, What kind of house does this creature live in? How does it get its food and water? ÈVisit your local library to learn more about the animals and plants in your neighborhood.

Garden Observations
Help your child keep a garden journal. Encourage him to draw pictures or write words in the journal to describe his observations. Ask him questions, such as What is happening to the seed? ÈOr What color are the leaves? ÈTalk together about what plants need in order to grow and how they change with time.
Stop and Smell the Roses
Count the roses 🌹 with Oscar. Color the picture!

Hey, what’s the big idea? This isn’t a grouchy garden!