A Garden on Groundhog Day

“Definitely groundhogs,” my friend said with conviction. He dismissed my suggestion that it might be a ground squirrel that dug the hole. Nope. Something to do with the nature of the dirt piled around. Why the little creature decided to dig up part of my walkway is beyond me.

The ways of all-too-human Little Groundhog is told in a beautifully illustrated and scientifically accurate book - Lynne Cherry’s children’s fable, *How Groundhog’s Garden Grew*. My friend was excited when I told her about the book. “Perfect!” she said, “Just enough information.” She wants to start a garden in the spring and share the book with her grandson. Grandma’s Garden.

Author-illustrator Lynne Cherry spent time learning her craft as an artist in residence at several renowned institutions, including the Smithsonian. She writes, “I learned from my father and mother what Little Groundhog learns from Squirrel in this story: how to plant seeds and how to care for plants by watering, weeding, and transplanting - and that in order to grow, plants need sunlight, water, and good earth.” Could a school garden follow?

Many years ago I spoke with another friend in Wrightwood about how his father started a Victory Garden during World War II. The garden was at the end of Highway 2 in Altadena. It served a practical purpose because fuel was needed for the war effort. Growing food locally has many other benefits. Farmers markets are popular because of the surprising difference in taste. It’s a point Little Groundhog becomes aware of. It’s also something my Grandma’s Garden friend wants to share with her family. Tastier, fresher, more healthful, and less costly. What could be better than that?

Groundhog Day occurs at the same time as the medieval celebration of Candlemas. There’s even an old Scottish prophecy that a sunny Candlemas Day means a long winter. February 2 is also recognized in religious communities as the Presentation at the Temple. That’s another story.

Have you ever wanted to start a garden on Groundhog Day? Please email jcromshow@yahoo.com.