



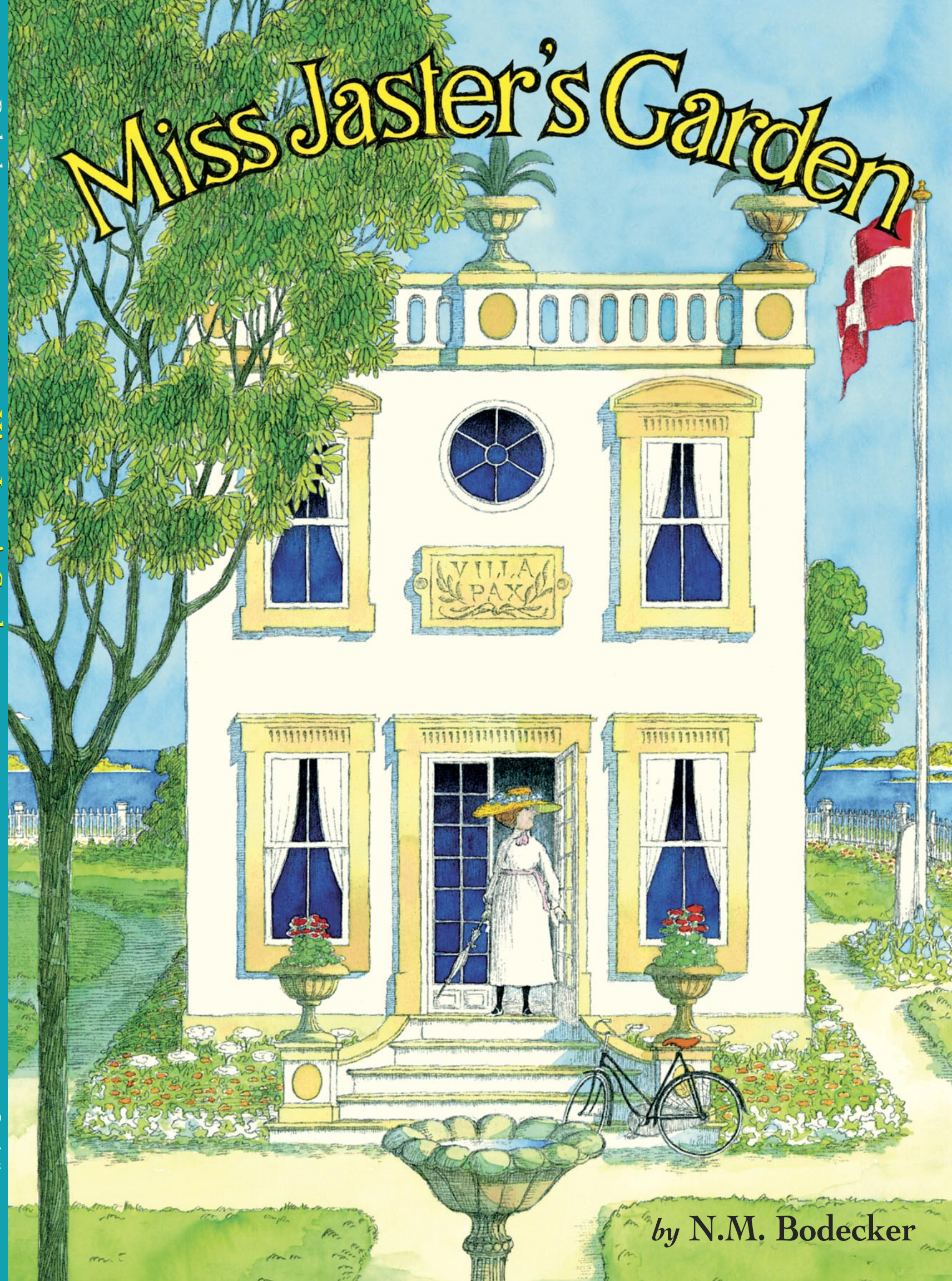
Bodecker

Miss Jaster's Garden

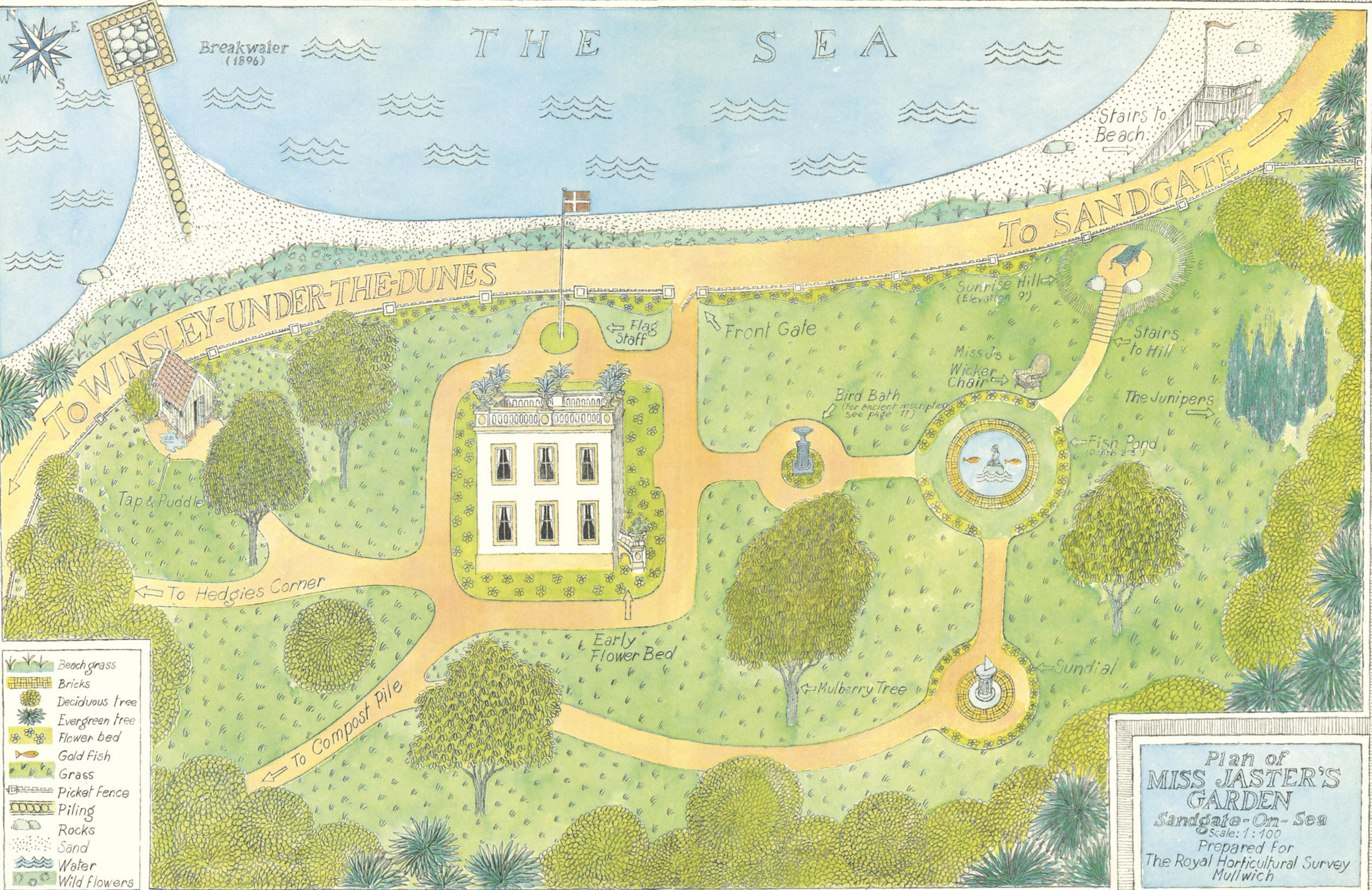
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Miss Jaster's Garden



by N.M. Bodecker



Breakwater
(1896)

T H E S E A

Stairs to Beach

TO SANDGATE

TO WINSLEY-UNDER-THE-DUNES

Flag Staff

Front Gate

Sunrise Hill
(Elevation 9')

Stairs to Hill

Miss J's
Wicker Chair

The Junipers

Bird Bath
(For ancient inscription
See page 11)

Fish Pond
(Depth 2'3")

Tap & Puddle

To Hedgies Corner

Early Flower Bed

Mulberry Tree

Sundial

To Compost Pile

- Beach grass
- Bricks
- Deciduous tree
- Evergreen tree
- Flower bed
- Gold fish
- Grass
- Picket fence
- Piling
- Rocks
- Sand
- Water
- Wild flowers

Plan of
**MISS JASTER'S
GARDEN**
Sandgate-On-Sea
Scale: 1:100
Prepared for
The Royal Horticultural Survey
Mullwich

Miss Jaster's Garden

To
Mrs. Sinclair

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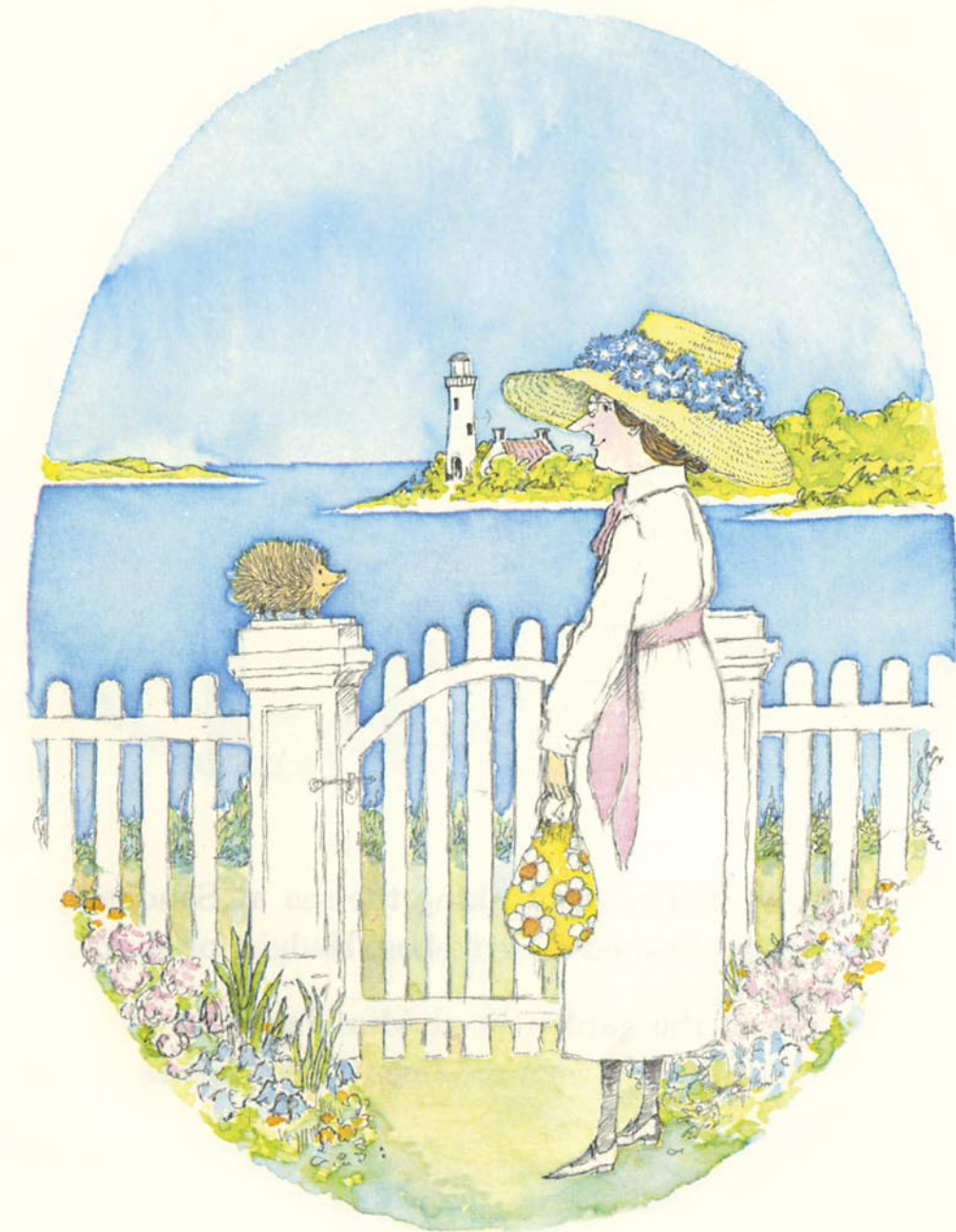
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p. cm.

Summary: After getting caught in Miss Jaster's spring planting, a hedgehog discovers he has become a four-legged, walking flower garden.

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First Edition



by
N. M. Bodecker

Purple House Press Kentucky



In a corner of a garden, overlooking the sea at Sandgate, lived a small, spiky animal called a hedgehog. Hedgie for short.

In the middle of the garden lived Miss Jaster in "Villa Pax," a square, whitewashed house with flowerpots on the front steps.

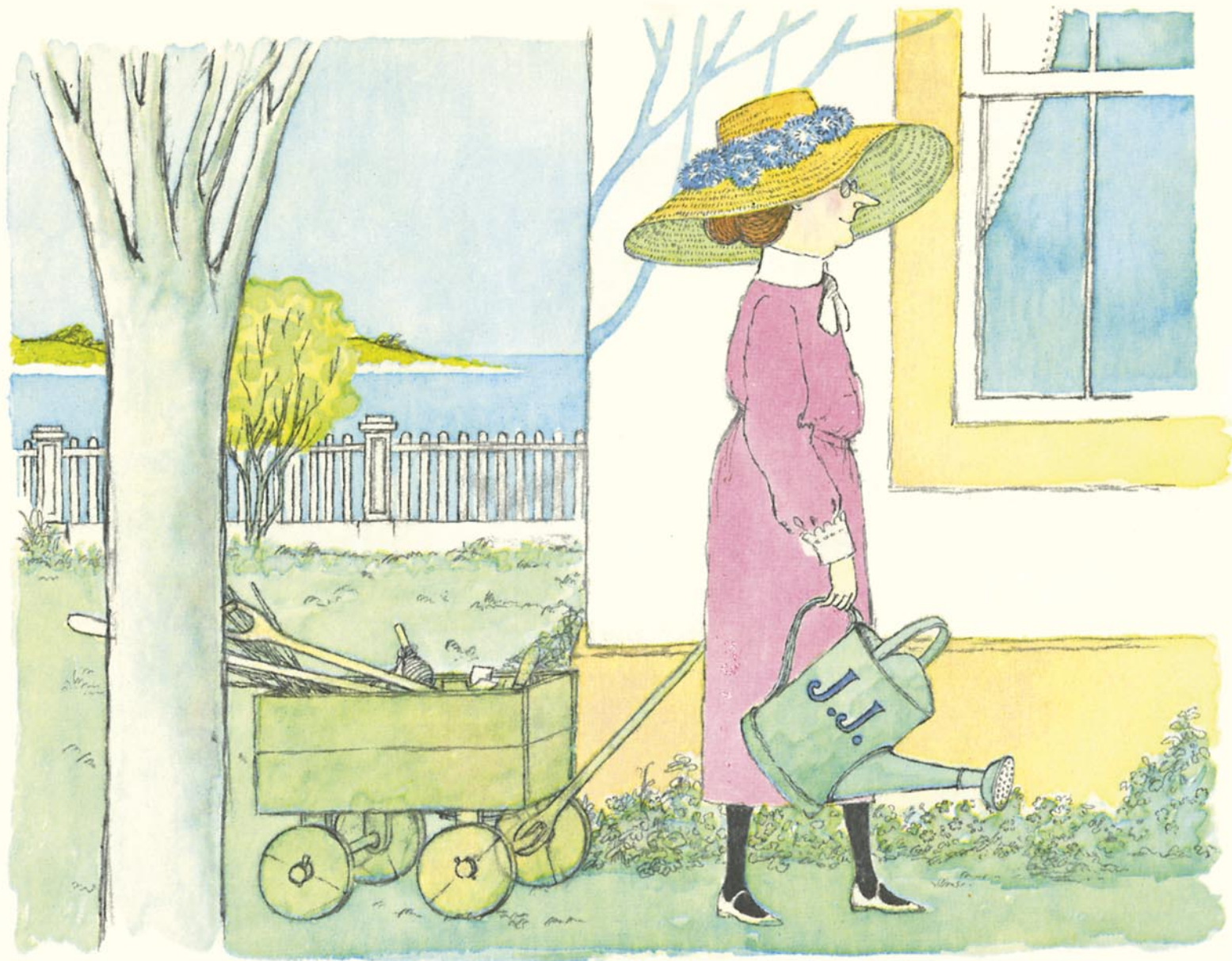
The two did not see much of each other, because Hedgie was by nature nocturnal, and Miss Jaster was not. But occasionally they met, just after sunset, when they both enjoyed strolling in the garden.

On these occasions, Miss Jaster would go back into the house for a saucer of milk, which she placed at what she hoped was the right end of the hedgehog.

But hedgehogs being the shape they are, and Miss Jaster being a little nearsighted, as often as not she put the saucer where the hedgehog's head wasn't. And Hedgie—so as not to cause distress—politely dipped his tail in the milk and pretended to drink. Later, when Miss Jaster went into the house and lit the lamp on the piano, he drank the milk properly.

Through the open door he could hear Miss Jaster at the piano, her fingers fluttering up and down the keyboard, picking out little tunes as sweet as April showers. Hedgie liked being played for while he had his milk, and Miss Jaster enjoyed having someone to play for.

This way they lived happily for a while.



Then one bright May morning, when the air was soft and full of birdsong, Miss Jaster came into the garden to do her spring planting. She pulled behind her a wagon full of garden tools and envelopes of flower seeds. She carried a large, green watering can with the letters J.J. (for Jessica Jaster) painted on it in blue. And because the sun was bright, she wore her dark glasses. These glasses made everything look brownish-gray, the same color as the empty flower bed she was about to seed, and the same color as Hedgie, who was asleep in the middle of it.

The flower bed was on the south side of the house, a protected nook, out of the wind, and full of sun. It was the first spot Miss Jaster planted each spring. She combed the bed lightly with a rake. She sprinkled the seeds evenly: Marigold and Baby's Breath and patches of Sweet William.

She showered it all generously with her watering can, never suspecting that a small, spiky animal was in the middle of it.

At first Hedgie thought of moving to a safer spot, but his quills did need combing, and he rather enjoyed having his back scratched. So he stayed.

He hardly felt the seeds at all; they were like dust settling among his quills. As for the shower from the watering can, it was like a gentle rain — not at all unpleasant after the heat and the dust.





When Miss Jaster went into the house to have lunch, Hedgie went back to sleep, enjoying the most perfect dreams.

Every day after that, Miss Jaster came with her watering can to sprinkle the flower bed and watch for green shoots.

And every night, Hedgie wandered through the garden, sniffing and nibbling the way hedgehogs do.

But after a while he began feeling restless. Something was happening, he didn't know what, but deep down among his quills, something was stirring and squirming, like a thousand tiny fingers tickling his skin. He was so itchy he couldn't sleep, and so curious he had to know just what was wrong.

