



# GROUNDWOOD STUDY GUIDES

## If You Want to Visit a Sea Garden

*Written by Kay Weisman  
Illustrated by Roy Henry Vickers*



Discover the wonder of ancient sea gardens on the Northwest Coast  
with this lyrical story of a young child who sets out to explore  
early one morning.

### **CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS**

Ages 5 to 8 / Grades K to 3

JUVENILE NONFICTION / People & Places / Canada / Indigenous

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## BOOK DESCRIPTION

Sea gardens have been created by First Peoples on the Northwest Coast for more than three thousand years. These gardens consist of stone reefs that are constructed at the lowest tide line, encouraging the growth of clams and other marine life on the gently sloped beach.

This lyrical story follows a young child and an older family member who set out to visit a sea garden early one morning. After anchoring their boat, they explore the beach. They reflect on the people who built the wall long ago, as well as those who have maintained it over the years. After digging for clams, they tidy up the beach, then return home.

The manuscript has been vetted and approved by the scientists of the Clam Garden Network and Kwaxistalla Wathl'thla Clan Chief Adam Dick. Roy Henry Vickers, whose ancestry includes the Tsimshian, Haida and Heiltsuk First Nations, has created hauntingly beautiful images to accompany the text.

An author's note provides further information about sea gardens, which have been found along the Pacific Coast, from Alaska to British Columbia to Washington State.

## PRE-READING QUESTIONS

Consider the title of this book: *If You Want to Visit a Sea Garden*. What do you think a sea garden is? Would you want to visit one? Why or why not?

Looking at the cover of the book, what do you notice? Where do you expect the story will take place and why? What time of day?

## POST-READING DISCUSSION QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

### BASIC QUESTIONS

What happens in this story? What is the main task it describes? What should a person be aware of if they want to visit a sea garden?

### ALL ABOUT SEA GARDENS

Have you ever seen or heard of a sea garden? If not, read the note at the end of this book, “More About Sea Gardens.” You may also wish to find videos (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=22Nytmxw2Z8>) and images online to give you a better idea about sea gardens, along with any other unfamiliar items mentioned in the book.

If you were to visit a sea garden, what would you most look forward to seeing or experiencing? What would you least look forward to?

If you live near a coastal area with sea gardens, ask an adult to take you to visit one and spot as many creatures as you can that were mentioned in the book.

## SEA GARDEN ART

Make a model sea garden in your home using items you may already have on hand: seashells, rocks, small plates, sand, bath toys, clay, water or anything else you can think of. Alternatively, you could make a sea garden drawing, paper or Play-Doh sculpture, or even a virtual one using a graphic design program. Study the descriptions of sea gardens in the book for ideas.

## A WALK ALONG THE WATER

You may not live near the sea or a sea garden, but there is probably a body of water near you like a lake or a pond. Go for a walk along the shore with an adult and observe how the plants and animals that live there are different than those that live on land farther from water. What do you see and notice? What needs tending to along the shore? Just like the characters in the story remove dead plants and other debris to make more room for the clams to grow, how can you improve your surroundings for animal life?



## AUTHOR AND ILLUSTRATOR BIOGRAPHIES



**Kay Weisman** is a librarian who has worked in elementary schools and public library youth services departments. Her research for this picture book debut included traveling to several sea gardens to observe archeologists and marine ecologists at work. Kay lives in Vancouver.

**Roy Henry Vickers** is an artist, speaker, storyteller and a leader in the Indigenous community. His art is inspired by the beauty of the Pacific Northwest Coast and the ancient cultures of his ancestors. He carries the Chieftainship, Tlakwagila, from the House of Walkus in Wuikinuxv. Roy has also received the Order of British Columbia and the Order of Canada for his involvement in the community. He holds an honorary Doctor of Letters from York University in Toronto. His art can be found in collections around the world, including a painting gifted to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.