

ALL ABOUT

By **JAN BRETT**

A strange sight!

Hi!

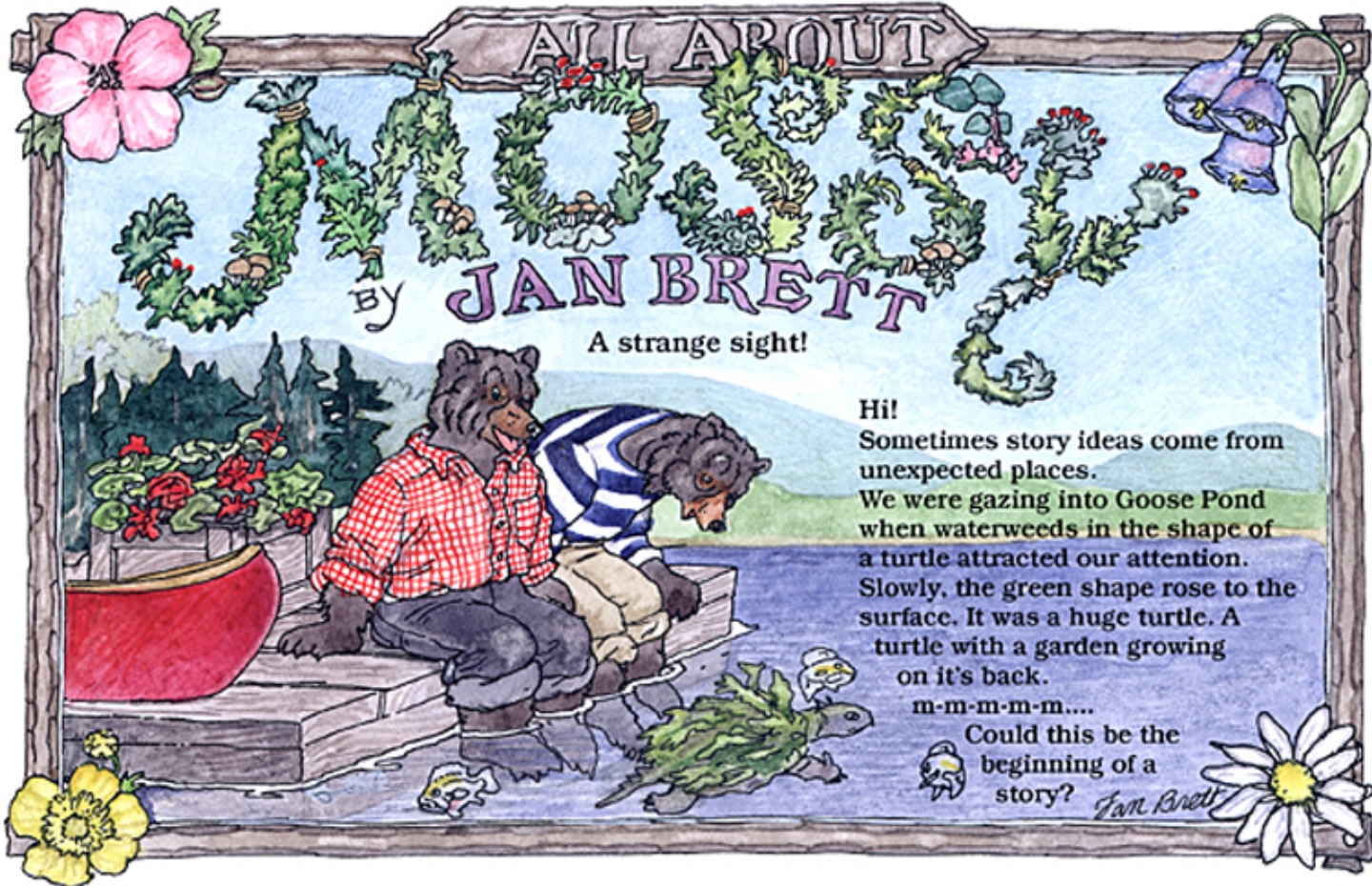
Sometimes story ideas come from unexpected places.

We were gazing into Goose Pond when waterweeds in the shape of a turtle attracted our attention. Slowly, the green shape rose to the surface. It was a huge turtle. A turtle with a garden growing on it's back.

m-m-m-m-m....

Could this be the beginning of a story?

Jan Brett





A great way to learn about the natural world is to go to a natural history museum or zoo. I spent time at the Harvard Museums where I did research for the borders of my book. In Victorian times, the period I set Mossy in, many amateur collectors set up small museums. The building I used for Dr. Carolina's museum is my old nursery school Wilder Memorial Hall in Hingham, Massachusetts, built in 1879.

When I decided to put collections in my borders, I put objects I could find in my backyard around the pages showing Lilypond Pond. Inside the museum the collections are from all over the world. Learning from zoos has been an enjoyable and productive way to observe the creatures I paint in my books. I observed box turtles in the Richmond Children's Museum and many animals in the Brookfield Zoo in Chicago, where animals are monitored to make sure they are not under stress, and their environments are carefully studied to provide a healthy life for each creature.



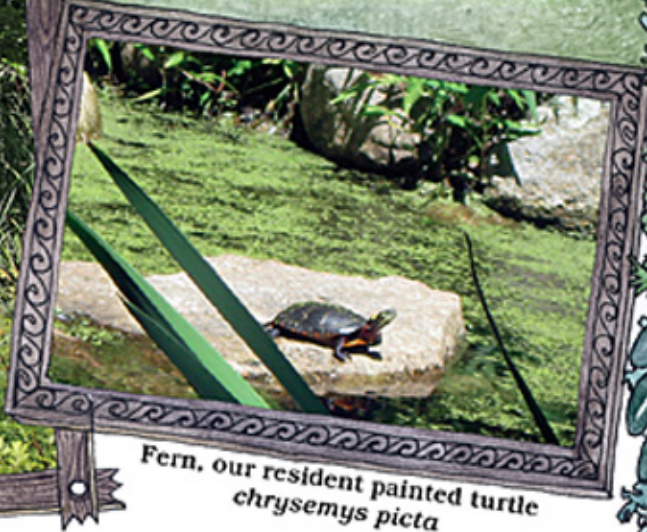
This is the upper shell of the eastern box turtle called the carapace.

vertebral scutes
costal scutes
marginal scutes

Box turtles eat snails, slugs, earthworms, strawberries and mushrooms. Some, like the *amanita muscaria* mushroom are poisonous to man but can be eaten by turtles.

The lower shell is the plastron.

Mossy is an eastern box turtle, *terrapene caroline* - The eastern box turtle is terrestrial which means it lives primarily on land. A male eastern box turtle usually has red eyes. A female most often has golden eyes and a rounder carapace. This kind of turtle can live to be 100 years old. The turtles do not grow gardens on their backs.



Fern, our resident painted turtle
chrysemys picta

Scan this code with your smart phones's QR Reader and Jan Brett will show you how to draw Mossy.

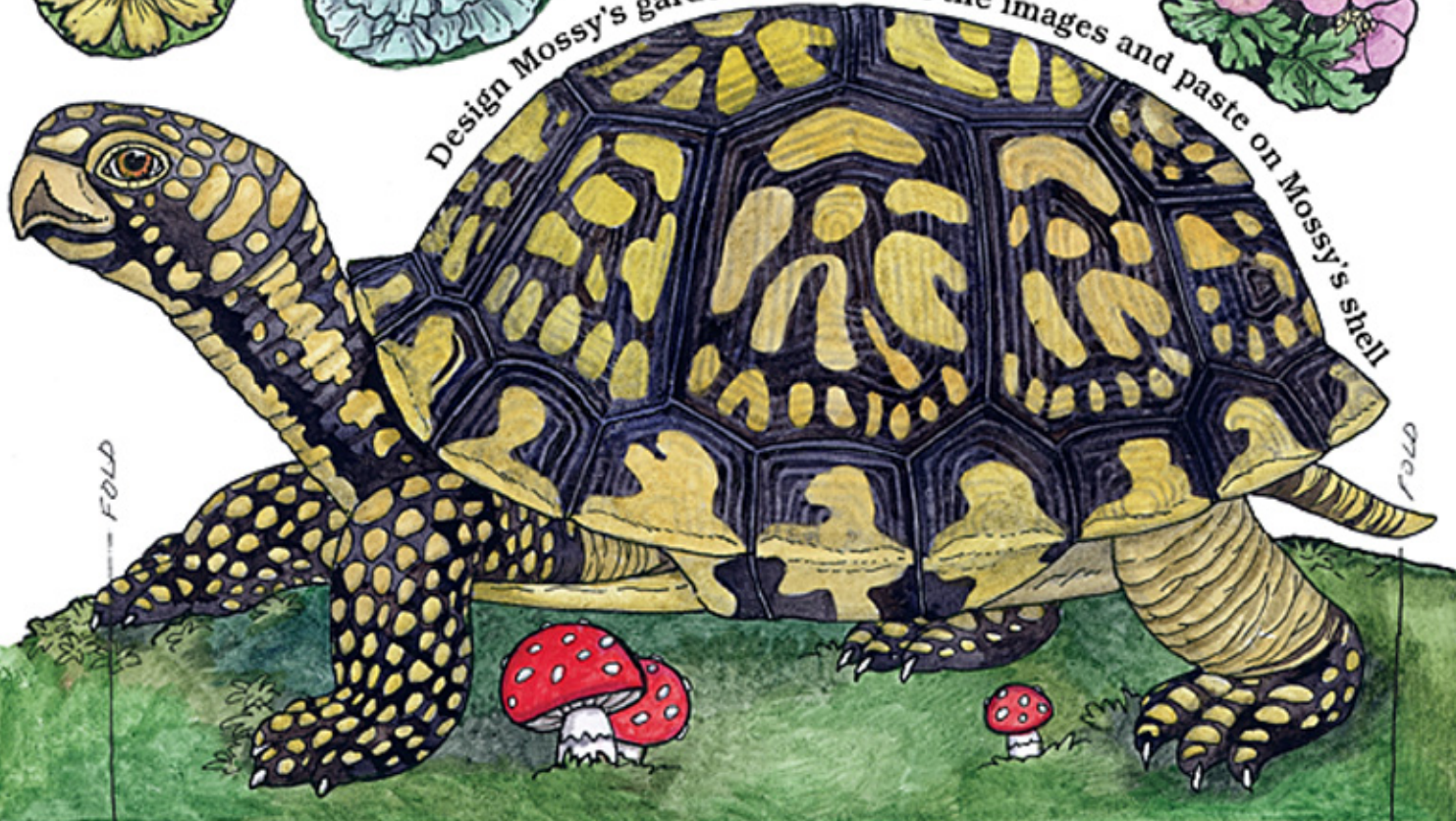


We created a turtle pond next to our house where we have a spring. We located the pond in a sunny spot because turtles, even the aquatic ones, need to sun themselves. We constructed the pond with built-in caves under water where a turtle could hide from predators like raccoons and fisher cats. It is 3-1/2' deep, lower than the frost line, allowing a turtle to hibernate in the bottom mud in winter. We planted strawberries and lingonberries, foods that turtles love. There is an area filled with soft sand to entice a female to lay her eggs. A naturalist and turtle specialist and author David Carroll explained to us that rather than stocking our pond we should create a good environment and turtles would wander in from surrounding wetlands.





Design Mossy's garden! Cut out the images and paste on Mossy's shell



FOLD

FOLD