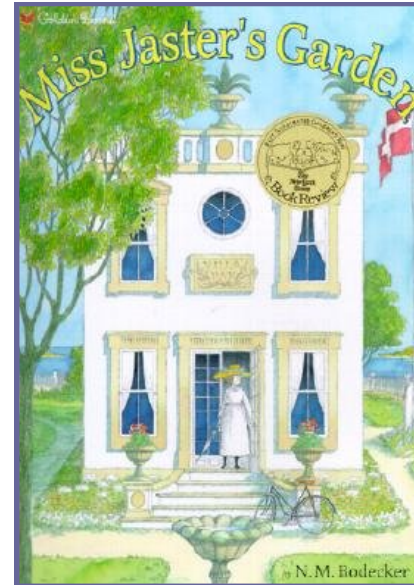


# The Literary Hedgehog

## Miss Jaster's Garden by N. M. Bodecker

While all hedgehog books for children are unique, this one stands out because of the author's unusual perspective on quills—less emphasis on prickliness, more on how quills might function in other ways.

Miss Jaster lives in "Villa Pax," a large, square, white-washed house in the middle of a large garden. Hedgeie lives in a quiet, peaceful corner of the garden overlooking the sea. There is a very gentle, symbiotic relationship. Both Hedgeie and Miss Jaster enjoy strolling in the garden just after sunset. Occasionally they meet and, when this happens, Miss Jaster goes right back into the house to get a saucer of milk for Hedgeie. She is quite near-sighted and, besides, it is difficult to see at dusk anyway. She tries to set the saucer of milk at the right end of the hedgehog but often she sets the saucer down near Hedgeie's back side. When this occurs, Hedgeie politely dips his backside into the saucer and pretends to drink. Once Hedgeie's milk has been served, Miss Jaster returns to her house to play the piano. Miss Jaster enjoys having someone to play for and Hedgeie enjoys music with his milk.



Then one sunny morning in May, Miss Jaster puts on her dark glasses and heads outdoors to do her spring planting. The glasses make everything look brownish-gray including the empty flower bed and Hedgeie who happens to be asleep in the center of the bed. Hedgeie feels the warm rain coming from the watering can and then feels Miss Jaster's rake gently scratching his back. He barely notices when seeds begin to settle among his quills. They are followed by another gentle rain from the watering can.

Several days later when Hedgeie peers at his reflection in a small puddle, he realizes why his back was been so itchy. Little spikes and shoots of green are peeping out from among his quills! He wonders whether he is becoming a flower bed or a vegetable garden. When he finds empty seed packets in the tool shed he can see from the pictures that the plants growing among his quills are Marigolds, Baby's Breath and fragrant Sweet William. He believes he shall be quite handsome. As a cloud of bees and butterflies gather around him, he takes solace in the fact that a bee has only one stinger while he, himself, has hundreds.

Finally on one gloriously sunny day Hedgeie dances for joy in the garden. The near-sighted Miss Jaster happens to glimpse this event and fears that thieves are stealing her flowers. She calls in Constable Wimple who eventually solves the mystery and reveals Hedgeie in all his flowery glory.

This lovely story was once designated as the best illustrated children's book by the New York Times Book Review. It is illustrated with colorful drawings by the author Niels Mogens Bodecker who also illustrated several other children's books. Mr. Bodecker was born in Copenhagen, Denmark in 1922 and immigrated to the United States in 1952. He passed away in 1988.

This book is out of print and somewhat difficult to find. A few used copies are available through Amazon, Alibris, and Advanced Book Exchange although they are quite pricey. WorldCat, an online catalog of library catalogs, lists 299 copies of the English edition in American libraries. You might consider requesting it through interlibrary loan at your local library.



Latte Art Hedgehog by mrskupe. Used with permission.

## What's Cooking at the Hedgehog Welfare Society?

The Hedgehog Welfare Society will be celebrating its 10th anniversary in October 2011.

We're going to make a whole year of celebration out of it and kick it off early in time for the holiday season. Heather Marshall and Sheila Dempsey are putting together a cookbook. Judie Peters has agreed to do the cover – so if you buy a cookbook you will be getting a work of art, too!

### WE NEED YOUR HELP!

We need you to send in your favorite recipes – lots of them!

### WE NEED YOUR HWS MEMORIES!

We also want you to send in favorite memories about the HWS. They will be published throughout the cookbook.

### WOULD YOU LIKE TO HAVE A DEDICATION TO YOUR HEDGIE IN THE COOKBOOK?

We are doing dedication spots that will run in the cookbook for a \$5 donation. It will be a quarter-page

spot. If you'd like to have a picture of your hedgie along with the dedication, it will be a half page spot for \$10. Donations will cover the cost of binding and will help make this a more profitable venture for the HWS.

### KNOW OF A BUSINESS THAT WOULD LIKE TO HAVE AN AD IN THE COOKBOOK?

We are also doing half-page ads for anyone who would like one for just \$15. This includes the company's logo. Again, donations will help offset binding fees so the fundraiser will be more profitable.

### HOW TO SEND IN YOUR SUBMISSION

Please email [Hedgie.Cookbook@gmail.com](mailto:Hedgie.Cookbook@gmail.com) and place the word Recipes, Memories, Dedication or Advertisement in the subject line. All monies should be made out to the Hedgehog Welfare Society and be sent care of Sheila Dempsey, 12245 Wendy Lane, Waldorf, Maryland 20601.

If you are making multiple subject donations, keep the emails separate, but one check is fine.

Thank you for your assistance!  
**Deadline is July 31. SO HURRY!**

# HEDGEHOG TRIVIA

## Aloe Humilis Echinata



Photograph by Tom Glavich. Used with permission

The plant genus Aloe has more than three hundred species plus hybrids. These drought tolerant, low maintenance plants, which range in height from as short as six inches to as tall as 18 feet, are known for their sharply toothed, thick, pointed leaves. Aloe leaves are toxic although the sap contained within the leaves of certain Aloe species is used in medicines and to treat sun burn and other mild burns. The flowers they produce resemble lilies and bloom at the top of tall spiky stems. Aloes may be grown outdoors in frost-free climates with dry winters. They do best in zones 9, 10 and 11 and are easy to care for, especially if they have plenty of sun and good drainage.

Humilis echinata, also known as Hedgehog Aloe, is a stemless, or short stemmed, dwarf aloe that remains small throughout its life cycle. It produces rosettes which can be up to 20 centimeters in diameter. The rosettes contain 20 to 30 short, ascending leaves that are 7 to 12 centimeters

long and about one centimeter wide. The waxy leaves are blue-gray or gray-green with thin white spines about three millimeters long. The leaves are also covered with transverse rows of irregularly spaced bumps on both the upper and lower surfaces. In late winter or early spring the plant may produce out-sized reddish-orange tubular flowers that appear at the top of tall spikes that can be 20 to 35 centimeters tall.

Sources consulted:

"Aloe humilis Echinata." Sunny Gardens. Sunny Gardens, 2010. Web. 6 June 2010.

<[http://www.sunnygardens.com/garden\\_plants/aloe/aloe\\_0069.php](http://www.sunnygardens.com/garden_plants/aloe/aloe_0069.php)>.

Aloe humilis." Cactus Art Nursery. John Chippindale, translator. N.p., 4 Mar. 2010.  
<http://www.cactus-art.biz/catalog/en/product/3248/Aloe-humilis.asp>