

= Pssst =

Pssst is an action video game developed and published by Ultimate Play the Game that was released for the ZX Spectrum in June 1983 . In the game , Robbie the Robot has to protect his plant ( a Thyrgodian Megga Chrisanthodil ) as it is attacked by various insects , each of which needs a different repellent to neutralise it . Pssst was the second game to be released by Ultimate , after Jetpac .

The game was written by Chris Stamper and graphics were designed by his brother , Tim Stamper . Pssst was one of the very few Spectrum games also available in ROM format for use with the Interface 2 , allowing " instantaneous " loading of the game ( the normal method of cassette loading could take several minutes ) . The game received positive reviews from two publications upon release , with critics mainly praising its presentation and gameplay . It was placed 40th on the " Best Selling Software " list by Personal Computer Games in December 1983 .

= = Gameplay = =

The game is presented from a single , 2D perspective , and revolves around Robbie the Robot 's objective to defend his plant from interstellar space slugs . The plant grows from a pot at the bottom centre of the screen , and spray cans containing three different pesticides are located on ledges on each side of the screen . Bonus items such as fertiliser and spades appear on unoccupied ledges which will increase both the players score and the plant 's growth rate .

There are three types of coloured insect , and three types of pesticide , which will either kill , stun , or have no effect on the insects . The player can only carry one type of pesticide at a time ; during the early stages of the game the lethal pesticide can be carried at all times , but later stages have more than one type of insect on screen at once , making the choice of pesticide more tactical .

As the plant grows , it will sprout leaves ; these both increase the growth rate and increase its vulnerability to the insects . Once the plant reaches a predetermined height , the player will be able to advance to the next level . A life will be deducted whenever the plant dies or the player makes contact with an insect .

= = Background = =

Ashby Computers and Graphics was founded by brothers Tim and Chris Stamper , along with Tim 's wife , Carol , from their headquarters in Ashby @-@ de @-@ la @-@ Zouch in 1982 . Under the trading name of Ultimate Play the Game , they began producing multiple video games for the ZX Spectrum throughout the early 1980s . Prior to founding Ultimate , the Stamper brothers had backgrounds in designing arcade machines , but failed to market their games successfully . The company were known for their reluctance to reveal details about their operations and upcoming projects . Little was known about their development process except that they used to work in " separate teams " ; one team would work on development whilst the other would concentrate on other aspects such as sound or graphics .

Pssst was one of the few Spectrum games also available in ROM format for use with the Interface 2 , allowing " instantaneous " loading of the game when the normal method of cassette loading could take several minutes . The game used the common technique of placing planar sprites with image sprites atop another , which often created graphical errors and overlapped colours on the console . Pssst was also able to run on the 16K version of the Spectrum .

= = Reception = =

Paul Liptrot of Home Computing Weekly praised the graphics , stating them as overall " smooth @-@ moving " and colourful , as well as praising the " addictive " gameplay . In the second issue of Personal Computer Games , the game was placed 40th on the its best selling software list . In the fourth issue of Personal Computing Games , Pssst was nominated for a 1983 game of the year list

on account of Ultimate 's " famous graphics " . According to the reviewer , other attributes of the game included its " originality " and " fun " in comparison to other Ultimate titles that were released in 1983 . In a retrospective review , a reviewer of Retro Games ! Now summarised that the game " was not the best " of Ultimate 's releases for the ZX Spectrum , despite considering it to be " less lauded " than the others . However , they considered Pssst to be a " taste of things to come " and a significant improvement over the " clunky " and " jumpy " animation of previous games for the ZX Spectrum .