

= Over the Hedge ( DS game ) =

Over the Hedge is a platform video game with stealth game elements developed by Vicarious Visions and published by Activision for the Nintendo DS handheld video game console . It was first released in North America , and was later released in Europe . The game is set immediately after the events of the DreamWorks movie Over the Hedge , unlike the console versions which follow the events of the film . Vicarious Visions is responsible for many handheld versions of licensed video games . Publisher Activision has a longstanding business relationship with animation studio DreamWorks and has exclusive global rights to publish games based on DreamWorks animated films .

Gameplay involves guiding three playable woodland creatures through suburban houses to collect items and return them to their forest . House inhabitants and traps must be avoided or neutralized to succeed . The game 's plot concerns Gladys Sharp 's attempt to turn what 's left of the animals ' forest into a swimming pool ; the animals try to prevent this by luring endangered species to the forest , making the forest a protected habitat . Over the Hedge received positive and average reviews from the gaming press , as well as gaming website IGN 's ' Best Game No One Played ' award for 2006 . The game was praised for the technical achievement of displaying full 3D on both of the Nintendo DS ' screens , but some reviewers found the gameplay repetitive .

= = Gameplay = =

The game has been likened to both Tomb Raider and Metal Gear Solid due to the 3D platforming and stealth gameplay respectively . Players guide the forest inhabitants through 20 levels , during which they must infiltrate a series of suburban homes in order to steal a variety of items and destroy construction materials . The items needed to lure endangered animals to the forest must be collected from houses and carried back to the forest one at a time . Each level requires several trips to be completed . Security systems must be avoided or deactivated in order to progress through each level . Household members and their pets must also be avoided , distracted or stunned by a thrown object . For example , a phone card can be used to make a prank call to lure a householder away , catnip can be used to distract cats .

Each character has their own unique abilities . Verne has the strength to push and carry large items and can retract into his shell in order to avoid detection , but cannot jump as high or run as swift as the other characters . RJ has average strength and agility . He can climb , lift items and also throw Verne . Hammy is the most agile of the three , running swifter and jumping higher . This enables him to circumvent security more easily .

Over the Hedge is presented in full 3D on both of the Nintendo DS ' screens , which is not often seen in a Nintendo DS game . The upper screen displays the game in an over @-@ the @-@ shoulder third person perspective , whereas the touch screen shows an overhead perspective . The lower screen indicates the sight range of enemies and can be used as a touch screen to target enemies to attack . The console 's microphone is used to attract the attention of dogs or to rouse the woodland creatures should they be knocked unconscious .

= = Multiplayer = =

A multiplayer mini @-@ game is included and allows two players to compete via the DS ' wireless connection , only one player needs an Over the Hedge game cartridge for two separate DS consoles to play . Stella the skunk is available in this game mode , alongside the three playable characters from the main game . Players navigate a maze to collect food before the timer runs out . The player with the most food wins the game . A most of five pieces of food can be carried at once , these must be carried to a collection area before more food can be picked up .

= = Plot = =

Over the Hedge is set immediately after the events of the animated film . Gladys Sharp , president of the homeowners ' association , plans to bulldoze the forest in order to build a swimming pool . She has been joined by a new character , the taxidermist . The animals decide to lure endangered species to the forest in order to have it declared a protected habitat , preventing its destruction . The householders have been warned about RJ and company 's intentions , and have created traps from everyday objects to repel the thieves .

= = Development = =

Unlike the home console versions , the Nintendo DS version was created as a separate game by Vicarious Visions . As well as differing from the other versions , this version was designed as a sequel to the animated film . Vicarious Visions by this point were responsible for bringing many series to the DS , including games in the Tony Hawk and Spider @-@ Man series . During development the team had to work with the handheld system 's limited 3D capabilities , such as " video RAM and software limitations " , techniques they would later discuss at a lecture held during the 2007 Game Developers Conference .

= = Reception = =

The game received both positive and average reviews from the gaming press , with an average score of 73 % from both Game Rankings and a 71 from Metacritic . Over the Hedge was awarded IGN 's " Best Game No One Played " award during their 2006 game of the year awards .

Several reviewers were impressed by the game 's 3D graphics , considering the graphical limitations of the Nintendo DS . GameZone 's Louis Bedigian commented " Three @-@ dimensional worlds are such a rarity on the DS that you 'll definitely take notice " . In particular , the technical accomplishment of using the DS ' two screens to show gameplay in two different angles and in full 3D was praised .

Critics are divided over the game 's difficulty level and target audience . Some found the game too easy for adult players . Nintendo World Report 's Lasse Pallesen stated Over the Hedge is not engaging to adults or children due to " the repetitive collect @-@ a @-@ thon nature of the game and the one @-@ dimensional gameplay " . GameZone 's Louis Bedigian had similar reservations , " Players young and old will be turned off by the lack of excitement " . Other reviewers felt the game was suitable for children and adults . Cheat Code Central 's Cole Smith stated " It 's not just for kids . It 's loaded with variety and will engage your mind , not just your reflexes " . Deeko 's Pete Sellers found the game " a well designed adventure that requires patience and planning " .

Some reviewers found the gameplay , focused mainly on collecting and returning objects , as repetitive . In his GameSpot review , Frank Provo stated " Games geared toward younger players are typically repetitive , but Over the Hedge for the Nintendo DS sets a new standard for repetition " . He lists one of the negative aspects of the game as " Whole game feels like housecleaning or a real estate tour " . GameZone 's Louis Bedigian also found the game repetitive , saying " .. the game stays far away from anything deep , opting for a simplistic series of missions that redefine the meaning of the word rehash " .