

American Gothic

Inspired by Grant Wood's iconic painting, we're down at the homestead and it's time to start work on the vegetable patch. Feel the earth, dig up vegetables and plant some new seeds, before returning home for a hoe-down and chilled drinks on the porch...

Environment

Create an area for 'farming' using a large trough or sand pit filled with soil. Place items around the space such as:

- Trowels and forks
- Sieves and flowerpots
- Variety of vegetables – carrots, potatoes, beans, cabbage, onions
- Variety of herbs – thyme, basil, sage, oregano
- Watering cans
- Flowerpot instrument created by hanging pots on a frame
- Baskets and trays
- Bowls of sunflower seeds and white beans
- Rainsticks
- Flowerpot puppet, scarecrow character and blackbird puppet

On the other side of the space, create the American Gothic 'porch' using bamboo for the frame, a rug door mat and furniture. A window frame hangs in the space. Harmonicas, guitars and drinks on the porch.

Costume – straw hats, neckerchiefs, aprons

Music - The American Midwest has a rich history of instrumental music from different immigrant communities to draw inspiration from. An example would be Traditional Scandinavian-American Folk Music Vol. 1 The Norwegians in Minnesota.

Activities

Compost Corner – Feel, smell, dig and sieve the compost. Fill flowerpots, bury hands and feet. Dig up carrots and potatoes, find other veg. Fill baskets with the veg you find, feeling the different textures, shapes and smell. Add various herb plants, feel and smell them. Plant them in the compost and water them using the watering can. Meet the flowerpot puppet and play the flowerpot instrument.

Seeds – Explore the different sound/textual qualities of seeds and beans by pouring into different containers. Fill pots and bowls. Plant them one by one into seed trays, then 'water' with rainsticks to make them grow.

Scarecrow – The cowardly scarecrow visits the garden, hiding from the crows. He's come to play and greets each individual, assisting the tasks. He dances and makes friends, introducing his friend the singing blackbird puppet. When he's gone, return to the homestead for a hoe down, playing guitars and harmonicas, then rest on the porch

Links

Seeds
Bamboo
Puppets
Gardening

Videos - American Gothic, Gardening