

Scarecrow Build

Fall activity

Activity: Students will make a class scarecrow. As desired, the students may write stories about their scarecrows and use their imagination to name their scarecrows. We need to do this activity on a dry day or else work under an overhang.

Goal: This lesson can be used as a writing exercise and it is also a fun and creative way to combine art, imagination and garden materials.

Supplies: wooden frames to support scarecrow bodies, straw (NOT hay), safety pins, twine, wire, markers for drawing face. Use brooms, rakes for cleanup afterwards.

Teacher/class provides: Pants (or other leg covering), buttoned shirt or other shirt, gloves, footwear, a head (i.e. pillowcase, bucket, gourd, etc.), accessories (hat, scarf, belt, etc.), extra markers, paint, etc.

Advance planning: Garden parents: This lesson is a little more involved than our typical lesson. Look over the detailed instructions on how to assemble your scarecrow. Review these ahead of time to make the construction go more smoothly. We have some short stakes available if you want to make a “kid” sized scarecrow.

Teachers: You will need to request from your class non-returnable items to dress the scarecrow. You may also wish to decide upon a name or theme for the scarecrow, etc.

How to proceed: If your class is doing a writing exercise, split the group in half. Have one half begin the writing assignment while the other half starts building the scarecrow. Or, have half of the class do garden maintenance activities (rake, weed, sweep, etc.) Make sure you allow enough time for the teams to switch places, and monitor activities so everyone has a chance to participate in the popular scarecrow building.

You may wish to divide into groups as follows:

- >head/face designers,
- >pants team,
- >shirt team,
- >glove/sock stuffers,
- >people tying off arms, legs.

Also, a crew can be in charge of raking up/gathering stray straw (another popular activity). It can get crazy but it is fun and the scarecrows always look great.

Be careful if you are using any safety pins as fasteners—try not to drop them so they don’t become a safety hazard later (the old needle in a haystack problem).

How to build your scarecrow

1. Arrange clothes on frame: Place pointed stake down one leg of pants. You can insert wire (clothes hanger) down other leg to bend it to shape if desired.

For long sleeve shirt, unbutton shirt and put frame cross pieces into arms. For knit or T-shirts you probably need to enlarge neck opening by cutting at the back then stretching shirt over the frame. You can pin shirt up later.

For other kinds of clothing (e.g. tights, skirts, etc.) you can just tie the scarecrow on top of the frame.

2. Lay scarecrow on ground to stuff—secure pants on frame. Before filling, secure pants to frame by running a piece of string through the back belt loop, then around the stick crosspiece or by making string "suspenders." Stuff legs and tie at the ankles and waist.
3. Arrange shirt/top as you stuff. Tuck the shirt into the pants, safety pin the shirt to the pants. Button the shirt up as you stuff the torso and arms. Attach gloves for hands. Tie the arms closed at the cuff.
4. Another team can be making the face/head as you work on the body. Draw the face of your scarecrow with permanent markers (or whatever) onto your pillowcase, bucket, pot, or whatever you are using. If you are using a cloth head make sure you have enough cloth at the bottom to tie off for the neck. Attach head to top of stick. (Note: you may need to pound on top of the stick to get the scarecrow into the ground.)
5. Finishing touches like hands (gloves), feet (shoes) really make the scarecrow look complete. Accessories like hats, hair, patches, beads will also make the scarecrow stand out. Secure your scarecrow in the garden by pounding the T frame into the ground or tying the frame to a tree or fence. **DO NOT PLACE THE SCARECROW AGAINST A BUILDING (fire hazard).**