

Crunching leaves underfoot; gardens painted crimson, scarlet and amber; vegetables and fruits ready to harvest – these signs of autumn's bounty remind us that winter's chill, quiet solemnity is fast approaching. Get ready to enjoy fall. Invite your family and friends over for a scarecrow making party.

Poulsbo cousins Denise Johnson and Ellen Ross-Cardoso host a scarecrow party every year. Guests come prepared to make scarecrows to take home. The only other requirements are a potluck item to share and food for the local foodbank. Here are the directions to make the Pots Family created by the Johnsons and Mr. Woodenhead created by the Cardosos.

Pots Family - Start with 2 x 2 lumber for each figure. Use lengths of eight or ten feet (you choose). Remember, part of the wood will be in the ground and you'll be bolting clay or plastic pots onto the top for the pot person's head. Cross pieces for shoulders can be wooden dowels, pieces of pipe, or a length of 2 x 2 lumber. Drill a hole in the top of the 2 x 2 to bolt a clay (or plastic) pot on for a head. Drill a hole through the 2 x 2 and slip a length of dowel or pipe through to make shoulders. You can also nail or bolt on a wooden cross piece instead. Paint faces on the clay or plastic pots using acrylic paint found at any local craft store.

Find scarecrow clothing at a thrift store or raid your closets for long forgotten items. Short sleeved or sleeveless clothing works but if you use long sleeves the scarecrows will look as if they have arms. Their clothing will blow in the breeze and you won't need any stuffing.

Wait until after inserting the wood into the ground before attaching the Pots family's heads. You might need to use a stepladder or step stool. When the frames are standing where you want them, dress the scarecrows, bolt on the pots for their heads and fill each pot with soil. Plant sedums, carex, fescues or any other trailing or spiky plant in the soil in the pots to make hair.

Mr. Woodenhead's body frame is also made using 2 x 2 wood. Use an eight or ten foot length for the vertical piece. Attach a 2 x 2 length of wood for a crosspiece.

Cut an oval piece of plywood for a head using a jigsaw. If you're adept at the jigsaw, make ears as you cut the oval face. Most local lumber or home improvement stores will cut an oval for you. You can also use a round or square piece; it's your choice. Add a face using acrylic paint. Hair can be painted on, or glue on pieces of hay. Twigs would make great hair too. Try copper or silver colored brillo pads for curly hair.

Attach the head to the frame with a nail or screw and you're ready to dress him. Dress Mr. Woodenhead in an old shirt and jeans. Try a plaid shirt and coveralls. Old gardening shoes or boots can make feet. Now's the perfect time to use those gardening gloves with the holey fingers. Gloves make good hands. Don't forget to put straw or hay in the gloves and shoes to give Mr. Woodenhead an authentic scarecrow look. Put an unshucked ear of corn in his pocket for added appeal. As a finishing touch tie a bandana around his head or give him a jaunty hat.

For further inspiration visit a local library or bookstore and consult the book *Scarecrows: making harvest figures and other yard folks* by Felder Rushing. Rushing is one of the best-known aficionados on scarecrows and scarecrow information. Inside the book you'll find scarecrow lore and photos on every page with directions for constructing a veritable encyclopedia of figures to add charm or entertainment to your home or garden.

Celebrate the turning of the seasons and add your own individual touches to this colorful and enjoyable time of year. You don't have to limit yourself to large harvest creatures; invent small scarecrows to add a festive touch to your home. Most of all make sure to enjoy this enchanting time of year with your family and friends.

Contact Peg in care of this newspaper or via email at gardenmentor@yahoo.com or ptillery@co.kitsap.wa.us