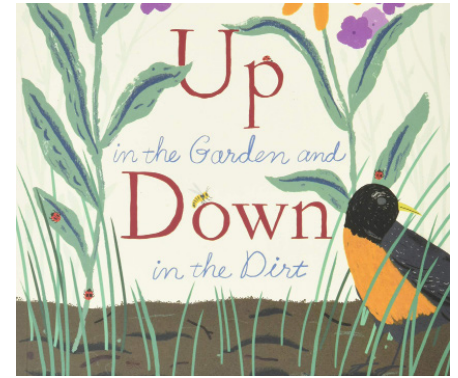


Up in the Garden and Down in the Dirt by Kate Messner

Book Synopsis: *Up in the Garden and Down in the Dirt* by Kate Messner with art by Christopher Silas Neal follows a grandmother and child as they grow their garden throughout a year. The story explores all areas of the garden from the dark, rich soil to the green, leafy surface. Even the animals and insects are highlighted in this beautifully illustrated story, which covers warm spring days to the cold, windy winter.

A recorded reading of this book is [available here](#).



Connection to Iowa History

Gardens have always been an important part of an Iowan's home. The Ioway grew corn, beans and squash typically alongside a river. European settlers, who arrived as Iowa became a state, grew corn, wheat and potatoes. These early farms also included smaller gardens that grew a variety of herbs, vegetables and flowers. In order to grow large fields of crops, the tough prairie soil had to be plowed which was backbreaking work. The first fields plowed were smaller and used to grow food for the family and livestock. As time passed, the fields grew larger to grow food to sell. Today, most Iowa farms grow corn and soybeans.

Goldie's Kids Club Storytime Activity

Gardens sometimes need decorations and a little whimsy. After reading the story, create a popsicle stick gnome for your garden.

Instructions

- 1** Color. Using a red colored marker, color the top ½-inch tip of the popsicle stick. This should be done on both sides of the stick and will serve as the hat.
- 2** Color. Choose a color for the bottom half of your gnome. Using that colored maker, color the bottom half of the popsicle stick on both sides. Leave around ½-inch space between the bottom color and the hat on both sides.
- 3** Beard. Optional: Roll a little Model Magic into a very snake shape. Apply the Model Magic to the "face" on the popsicle stick along the top of the bottom color and along the sides of the stick up to the hat. This will be the beard.
- 4** Draw. Using a black coloring marker, draw the gnome's eyes, nose and mouth in the space between the bottom color and hat.
- 5** Be creative. Repeat and make as many as you would like to have in the garden. Try a variety of colors and designs.
- 6** Share! After you complete your activity, share your work with the State Historical Museum of Iowa. Email a photo of your project to museum.education@iowa.gov. We want to share your creation with others!

Materials

- Popsicle stick
- Color markers
- Optional: Model Magic, googly eyes, additional decorative materials

Instructions continued on next page

Up in the Garden and Down in the Dirt by Kate Messner

Instructions continued

- 7 Questions to Spark Learning
- Do you have a garden? If so, what is your favorite thing to grow?
 - This story is about the different seasons in a garden. What is your favorite season? Why?
 - If you had a farm, what would you grow? Would you grow anything like the loway or the European settlers? Why or why not?