

Goldie at Home: Innovative Iowans

Activity Overview: Did you know Iowa has an official flower? As we commemorate Iowa's upcoming 175th anniversary of statehood, the Innovative Iowans program will explore Iowa symbols from rock to tree, and everything in between. This month's activity has young historians investigating Iowa's official state flower, learning about Iowan Norman Borlaug and growing their own miniature garden.

Connection to Iowa History

Norman Borlaug was born on March 25, 1914, near Cresco, Iowa, and he would win the Nobel Peace Prize in 1970 for his work in agriculture. He studied plant pathology at the University of Minnesota. He participated in the Rockefeller Foundation's program where he researched wheat improvement in Mexico, and helped train other scientists. Borlaug then developed wheat varieties that could be disease resistant and have high yield potential. His findings helped spark the "Green Revolution," and assisted with fighting hunger around the world. Borlaug wished to recognize other people's achievements in the agriculture field. The World Food Prize was created in 1986 and honors individuals who contribute to improving "quality, quantity, or availability of food throughout the world." The [World Food Prize Foundation](#) is located in Des Moines, Iowa.



Iowa's State Flower

The Iowa General Assembly declared the wild rose the official state flower in 1897. The wild rose was chosen because it was already included in the design of silver service created for the USS Iowa battleship. The flower can be found across the state and is easily spotted because of its pink petals and bright yellow stamens. Additional information and images of the USS Iowa Silver Service can be found in this [Palimpsest](#) article, "[The USS Iowa Silver Service Comes Home.](#)"

Instructions ([Video Instructions Available](#))

- 1 **Plan.** Decide how many seeds you want to grow. After making your decision, cut down your egg carton using scissors to your desired amount of cups.
- 2 **Fill.** Carefully fill each cup with your choice of potting soil. The cups should be filled up to the brim, but should not pour over.
- 3 **Poke.** Using your finger, poke a small hole in the center of each cup. This hole should go halfway down the cup in length.
- 4 **Plant.** Place one seed into each hole you have created. Once the seed is placed, carefully recover with soil to cover.
- 5 **Water.** Water each cup and place in a bright, sunny space. Remember to water every day.

Instructions continued on next page

Materials

- Potting soil
- Seeds: *We recommend easy-to-grow seeds such as peas, sunflower or cucumbers*
- Watering can or spray bottle
- Cardboard egg carton
- Scissors

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Instructions continued

- 6 **Soak.** Once the seeds have started to sprout, it is time to prepare them to be planted in a larger space. Soak the egg carton in water until completely soaked through. This will make it easier to tear apart the carton into individual cups.
- 7 **Plant.** Dig a hole in your chosen space, either a garden outside or a larger indoor pot. Place each wet cup into a hole and cover with dirt. The cups will deteriorate over time.
- 8 **Share!** If you would like to share your results with the State Historical Museum of Iowa, please email your garden photos to museum.education@iowa.gov. We want to share your project with other young historians!
- 9 **Questions to Spark Learning**
 - Each state is allowed two statues in the National Statuary Hall, located in the United States Capitol Building. Dr. Norman E. Borlaug is one of two statues to represent Iowans. Why do you think he was chosen to represent the state?
 - Do you think state flowers are necessary? Why or why not?
 - Iowa is home to many different types of plants. What would you choose as the state's official flower, official crop and official plant? Why?
- 10 **Additional Resources**

Explore these resources below to learn more about Iowa's official state flower.

 - [The Goldfinch - State Symbols](#)
 - [Annals of Iowa - The State Flower of Iowa](#)
 - [Iowa State University: Extension and Outreach - Iowa's State Flower - the Wild Rose](#)
 - [World Food Prize](#)
 - [National Statuary Hall - Dr. Norman E Borlaug Statue](#)