CROP ART is thought to have originated on farms, where people had an abundance of seeds and were less busy in the winters. They glued seeds to boards to make pictures. Since the 1960s, Owatonna resident Lillian Colton entered her seed portraits in the State Fair's competition. She won so many times that the fair finally gave her an entire wall each summer to show her work. She demonstrated the craft on the fairgrounds for many years and inspired generations of people to make their own crop art.

Entering the fair’s competition requires reading through the online Ag-Hort-Bee premium book to find out what categories are available and what seeds to use. Only seeds that can be grown in Minnesota as an official crop can be used in the competition. Our state’s most valuable crop is corn. It’s followed by soybeans, sugar beets, wheat, barley, flaxseed, and oats. But in crop art there are many seeds to use. And we’ve made it easy for you this year with this Crop Art Kit.

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Either draw your own illustration onto the canvas with a pencil or copy one of the included templates.

   If you want to transfer the design onto the canvas, use this technique: cut out illustration. On the back side, use the side of your pencil’s lead to cover where all the lines are on your template. You are essentially making carbon to transfer the drawing. Flip illustration onto canvas and either hold into place or use a little tape. Draw over the lines with a blunt pencil so paper doesn’t tear. Remove paper and the design should be on the canvas. Touch up as needed.

2. To outline your illustration in seeds, draw a line of glue about an inch or two long over part of your lines. Don’t use too much glue or it will dry before you can put on the seeds. Place seeds on the line individually and push then into place with the toothpick.

3. To fill in solid areas with seeds, dab glue onto the area and use the paintbrush to spread it out. Pour seeds onto area.

   That’s it! Have fun.

   Post a photo of your finished piece on social media with the hashtag #mnstatefair.

Want to enter your completed piece in the 2021 Minnesota State Fair crop art competition?

Stay tuned for a special entry class for crop art kits.

Sign up for email updates at mnstatefair.org/competitions/ag-hort-bee/.

INCLUDED IN KIT:

- 5x7 canvas
- Glue
- Toothpicks
- Pencil
- Paintbrush
- Seeds: sunflower, flax, field peas, wheat, buckwheat, millet, corn
Thanks to long-time crop artists Linda Koutsky and David Steinlicht for helping with the crop art kit. Visit cropart.com to see their work along with many other artists.

In 1991, Linda Koutsky started making artworks of grain elevators by gluing together grains that were stored inside the buildings themselves. One day a mouse ate the lower half of all of them and she switched to making jewelry. A different Minnesota seed is featured in each piece: soybeans, corn, wheat, wild rice, kidney beans, Honeycrisp apples, pine trees, oats, and sugar beets. She's coauthored, with her mother Kathryn Strand Koutsky, *Minnesota State Fair: An Illustrated History* and sells postcards featuring vintage fair imagery in the Visitors Plaza souvenir store.

David Steinlicht is a cartoonist and designer, and has been a Minnesota State Fair crop artist since attending a crop art party thrown by Linda Koutsky in 1994. His crop art themes include Hong Kong action movie stars and Festal vegetable cans. He started the cropart.com website in 2000. He did the crop art lettering for the cover of the 2007 book, *Seed Queen: The Story of Crop Art and the Amazing Lillian Colton*, by Colleen Sheehy. David and his wife Delores (also a Minnesota State Fair crop artist) moved from St. Paul, Minn. to Edmonton, Alberta, Canada in 2012. To view crop art design templates created by David, visit www.mnstatefair.org/competitions/ag-hort-bee/crop-art-and-scarecrow/

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