

## Dessert Plates

### inspired by *Good Earth: The Pots & Passion of Walter Ostrom*

Lesson plan prepared by Rebecca Crofts, Gallery Animator, for the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia.

### Suggested Grade/Age Levels

Recommended for ages 8+

### Introduction

In this activity, we will learn about and experiment with surface decoration by taking inspiration from the work of ceramicist Walter Ostrom. In addition to Walter being an inspiring teacher and one of Canada's foremost ceramic artists, he is also an avid gardener. These dessert plates reference botanical details of plant life in his garden. Today, we will be creating our own versions of Walter's dessert plates with plants drawn from our own surroundings.



Walter Ostrom, *Dessert Plate Larix Details*, 2002  
Earthenware, cone 04, press moulded, maiolica  
2.7 x 21.2 x 21.5 cm  
Gift of the Artist, Indian Harbour, Nova Scotia, 2005



Walter Ostrom, *Dessert Plate with Witch Hazel (Hammel's) Decoration*, 2002-2004  
Earthenware, cone 04, press moulded, maiolica  
2.7 x 21.7 x 21.8 cm  
Gift of the Artist, Indian Harbour, Nova Scotia, 2005

## Set up

Find a comfortable place to sit with lots of room to spread out your materials in front of you.

## Materials

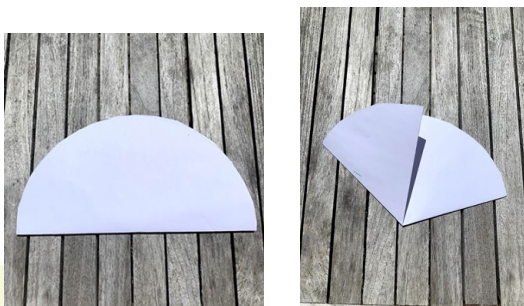
- Paper
- Scissors
- Drawing tools (pencils, pens, markers, pencil crayons, etc.)
- Paper plates (large or small)
- A gathering of plants

## Process

1. Gather all of the materials you'd like to use to make your dessert plates.



2. Trim any of the existing decoration off of your plate using your scissors.
3. Using the bottom of your paper plate as a guide, trace a circle onto your paper. It's okay if this circle isn't perfect!



4. Fold your cut out circle in half once, then into thirds, it should look like a triangle. Cut off any excess paper so that it is uniform near the edge.



5. Starting from the right side of the triangle, cut a smooth arc all the way to the left side. When you unfold the sheet, it should have six scalloped edges.



6. Place your cut paper onto the back of your paper plate. Use your pencil or pen to mark where the scalloped edges should be. Using your scissors, cut the scallops into your paper plate



7. Now, it is time to decorate your plate! Begin to look around your house, your backyard, or, with the help of a guardian, take a walk around your block. Perhaps you can choose to take this as an opportunity to learn about what the names of plants are in your backyard or neighbourhood and this may influence your final composition.

You can decide on a theme for your dessert plate or choose to focus on one specific plant and deconstruct it. Some good examples would be:

- Different plants in your backyard
- Flowers in different stages of blooming
- Different kinds of leaves in your backyard

Remember: if it is not your plant, you can't pick it! Choose to take a photo or sketch it in a notebook instead.

Lay out the plants, leaves, bark, pine cones, shells or anything else you collected onto a table. You can start by arranging each element on the plate itself, then when you are happy with your composition, you can take the elements away and draw them.

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## Resources

- Exhibition page and virtual tour of the exhibition  
<https://artgalleryofnovascotia.ca/exhibitions/walterostromgoodearth>