

Costumes

James and the Giant Peach JR. unfolds somewhere between 1960s England and a magical place where creepy crawlers lie! For the place and time, a few suggestive pieces will do the trick. For the more magical parts, here's your opportunity to have a whole lot of fun.

Use Base Costumes

Your **Vagrants, Angry Crowd, Garden Chorus, New Yorkers, Reporters, and Hollywood Agents** will probably all be played by the members of your ensemble. If possible ask them to provide a base costume that can be applied to each group of characters. For instance, ask everyone to provide a pair of black pants, a pair of brown pants, and ideally, a couple of shirts – a green t-shirt, and a white button-down shirt. Since these characters will probably all be sourced from the same kids, base costumes give you a great jumping-off point. For instance, maybe your New Yorkers, Reporters, and Hollywood Agents wear black pants and your Vagrants, Angry Crowd, and Garden Chorus wear brown. You'll see more detailed examples for each in this section.

About Color

Use color to help delineate different groups of ensemble. For example, your Garden Chorus could wear green accessories, and your Hollywood Agents could wear costume pieces with gold accents. This will help the audience visually identify the two gangs and follow the story line.

Also, remember to think about the color of your theater's curtains and any backdrops and scenery you will be using. You want to make sure the costumes don't blend into the scenery.

A Final Note

The actors need to be able to act, move and breathe in their long-awaited costumes! Remember, lights add heat, hats come off and an understudy may have to wear another actor's costumes. Keep your costume wardrobe simple to put onto the body (bravo for duct tape and Velcro) and one that makes the character feel like the real deal.

Caring for Costumes

When a generous donation of clothing is given to your organization, there are a few steps that can be taken to properly clean the garments. First, put each piece into a heavy-duty freezer bag, making sure to squeeze out as much air as possible before sealing the bag closed. Next, lay the bags of clothing into a chest freezer (not a regular refrigerator). Leave the clothes in the chest freezer for at least three days, then transfer to a regular refrigerator for two days, and after taking the bags out the fridge, allow them to sit – sealed – for one more day. Upon opening the bags, immediately place the garment in a dryer on hot for 15 – 30 minutes. After that, the machine-washable clothes will be ready to put through a regular washing cycle.

Remember, if you see or smell mold of any kind, dispose of the garment and any garments it came into contact with – better safe than sorry!

Maintaining costume cleanliness during the run of the show can be tricky as well. In a perfect world, all costumes would be washable, but in reality costumes run the gamut – there are any number of glued-on, painted-on, glittery, or vintage garments that simply cannot go into the washing machine. For those delicate or specialized costumes, professionals use garment spray.

Costumes By Character

LADAHLORD is controlling as well as narrating our story, so it's fun to have him pop up in many different scenes, however, Ladahlord's main costume should be dark-colored trousers, a long sleeve button-down shirt, and a floor length coat, which will give him an air of mystery. Dark dress shoes or boots are a great addition, and if you want to give him some magical flair, feel free to add a scarf, an outlandish top hat, or fingerless gloves.

The pilot productions added Ladahlord to many of the bigger numbers in the show. For example, he could appear in "Money On That Tree" as one of the Garden Guild Ladies (only if your Ladahlord and your community

are comfortable of course), or as one of the Hollywood Agents or Reporters. For Scene 9, dress Ladahlord as a ship's porter and in "Plump and Juicy" add him to the Seagull ensemble. Feel free to take this as far as you can, making Ladahlord into a sort of "Where's Waldo" for your audience. Keep in mind, this may require layering some costume pieces so your Ladahlord doesn't miss any of his entrances due to costume changes.

JAMES was just deposited to his aunts from the Painswick Orphanage, so his outfit should be reminiscent of an English schoolboy uniform. Dress James in a white short-sleeve button down shirt, a sweater vest, and a modest tie. Give him shorts that fall just above the knees, knee-high dress socks, and dress shoes. Darker colors like brown, black and grey will keep the uniform simple and basic. Unfortunately, James hasn't seen a new set of clothes in a while.

THE INSECTS

James first encounters the Insects as puppets, and through a bit of magic, they change into human-sized creatures. The Insects' costumes should reflect what those puppets look like, but don't get caught up in trying to replicate them completely. The costumes should be human clothes with an insect influence. It's up to you on how far you want to go with making them insect-like.

LADYBUG is the epitome of an English lady. Think high tea! Costume your Ladybug in a red dress with black polka dots and a petticoat to give the skirt some volume. Add white lace trim to the skirt, at the waist and on the sleeves to give the dress an added sense of manners and class. A simple red hat completes the look.

For **GRASSHOPPER**, green is the name of the game. Give your actor long pants, a long-sleeve button down shirt, and a fun jacket with tails that create the illusion of grasshopper wings. Use several different kinds of greens – even greens with different patterns to break up the color and give the costumes a bit of texture. Grasshopper is perceived as a leader among the Insects, so give the actor a simple bowtie or non-prescription glasses to build a trusting, paternal quality.



Ladahlord as the ship's porter.



Ladybug dances!



"Everywhere That You Are"

SPIDER is a clever trickster with web up her sleeves. A punky black dress with a petticoat and a bustle is helpful to give Spider some shape as an insect. You can attach two fluffy scarves on each side of the bustle, giving your spider a total of eight legs in all – don't forget that the performer's actual arms and legs count! A black waistcoat with a fake fur collar will give the costume extra insect texture.

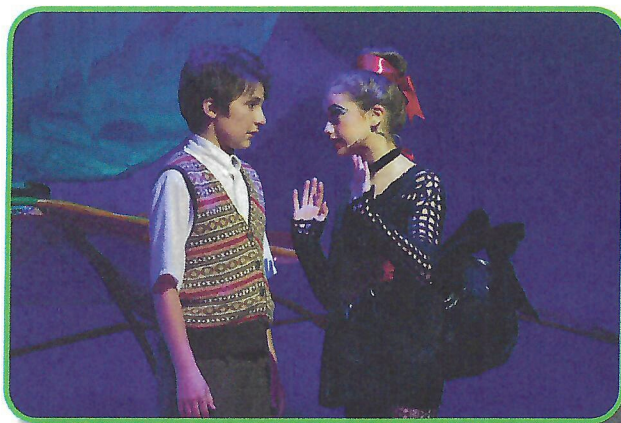
EARTHWORM should appear lean and long. Create this illusion by costuming him head to toe in the same shade of brown including a shirt, pants, gloves, shoes and hat. His overall silhouette should be slim, so choose tight-fitting clothes. Add suspenders, spats and a beret or beanie cap and a pair of round sunglasses (because Earthworm can't see very well) to complete the look of this wonderful character.

CENTIPEDE is best costumed in a three-piece brown or black suit: trousers, vest, and jacket. The shirt can be a button down or a henley. Having tails on the jacket helps to create the illusion of an insect. On each side of the tuxedo jacket and trousers, attach large fringe to give the impression of centipede legs. A simple dark brown or black fedora will help to complete the insect-look.

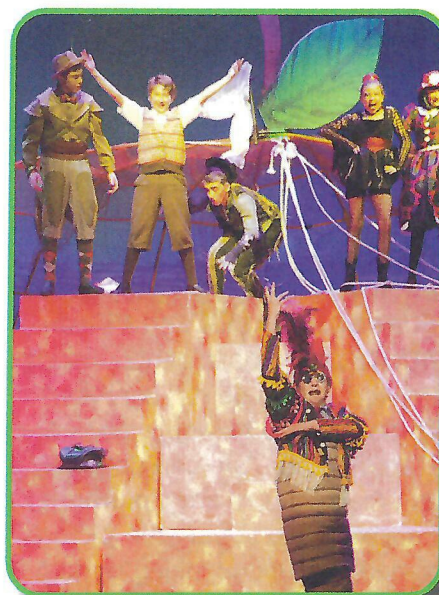
Dress your **PUPPETEERS** in basic blacks including a long-sleeve black tee, comfortable black pants, a black beanie, and soft black shoes. It's important that the focus stays on the puppets themselves, not the puppeteers.

MR. TROTTER, MRS. TROTTER, KARL KREATOUR and the **ZOO CROWD** all appear in James' nightmare. The glasses and scarf should be clearly visible on Mr. and Mrs. Trotter, while Karl Kreatour and the Zoo Crowd can add blazers or cardigans over their base costume.

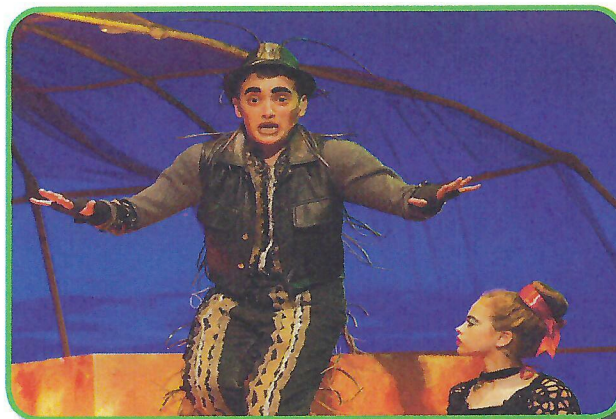
SPIKER and **SPONGE** should start the show in house dresses that resemble muumuus or some equally inexpensive and comfortable basic dress. Cardigans, house jackets, slippers and even bandanas for the hair are helpful layers to add character. As Spiker and Sponge come into more money, trade in the shabby muumuus for cocktail dresses, outlandish fake furs and gaudy jewelry. In general, the pair's costumes should complement one another and show off their ridiculousness.



"You're clever, like a spider.
Aren't you, James?"



"Plump and Juicy"



"Floatin' Along"

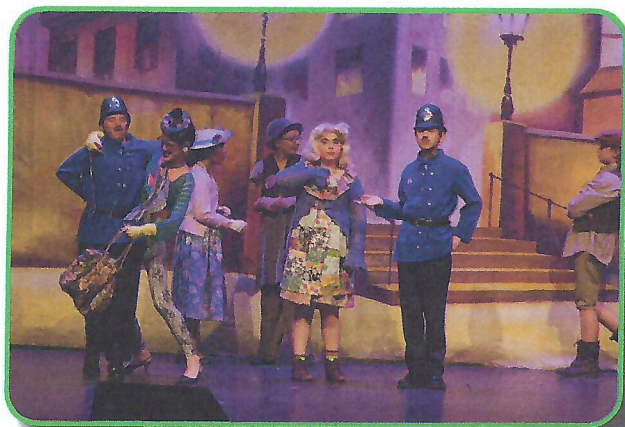
Give your **MATRON NURSE** a floor-length, uniform-like navy dress. It should have long sleeves and a collar that goes over her neck. Think conservative and intimidating.

Your **CRUISE ENSEMBLE** can be in resort-wear: shorts, t-shirts, sunglasses and hats. It's great to add beach towels around waists or rolled and draped around shoulders. Anything that says "vacationer" is a perfect costume addition.

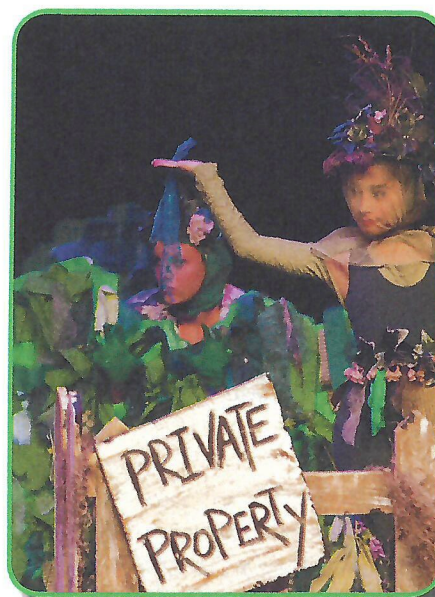
Match **BILLY** and **BOBBY BOBBY-COP** in Scotland Yard uniforms: black pants, black police coats, white button-down shirts, black ties, and black custodian helmets (which are readily available online). If you're working off a black backdrop, dark blue uniforms will do the trick. Apply official police silver decals to the centers of the helmets as well as the arms of the jackets. An Internet search will yield many pictures to help you in perfecting this look!

The **VAGRANTS**, including **DOREEN DRIGGLES**, **RIDGLEY RAPSCALLION**, **VIOLET FUNKSCHMELLER** and **CHRIS CRYERMOUTH**, need dark pants, henleys or long-sleeved cotton shirts, scarves, fingerless gloves, and Newsboy caps or old, battered ladies' hats. You can definitely mix and match, making sure each performer has different accessories to vary the picture. They're a meager bunch looking to help the aunts in their treachery. The **PASSING MAN**, **MAN (with wallet)** and **PASSING WOMAN** should be dressed nicely in brighter clothing to provide a contrast to the Vagrants.

The **GARDEN CHORUS** are botanical creatures that help transition from the normal world into one of magic in "Shake It Up." Like the Insects, think of them as plant versions of people. Dress them in tights, simple t-shirts, and belts of various greens and browns. It doesn't matter too much that there's a logic to their layering, as long it looks more like camouflage. You can give them green hats with fake shrubbery and flowers attached to the top. Again, get creative with this fun set of costumes.



Billy and Bobby Bobby-Cop.



Spiker and Sponge's garden.



"There's Money On That Tree"

Dress your **REPORTERS**, including **IDA WALTERS**, in suits complete with trousers, button-down shirts, and jackets. Feel free to diversify the look with some Reporters wearing ties, suspenders, fedoras, vests, or some combination of these accessories. Additionally, simple props like pencils, notepads, and clipboards are helpful to create the image.

BITSY BOTANA and the rest of the **LADIES' GARDEN GUILD** should be coordinated in an array of bright floral print dresses. Add gloves, pearls, and extravagant sunhats with flowers to emphasize the botanical look. The more outlandish, the better.

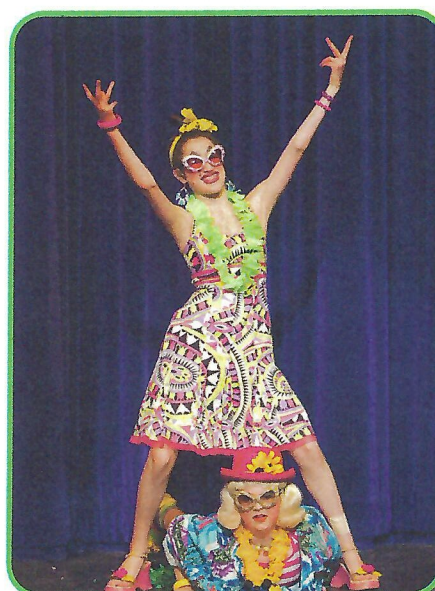
BUZZ and the other **HOLLYWOOD AGENTS** can be adorned in jewel-toned suits with dark shirts underneath and sunglasses. The audience should understand that these agents have just flown in from Hollywood and are ready to make a bunch of money exploiting the giant peach. Black dress shoes for the guys and heels for the girls will work just fine.

For the **FARM ANIMALS**, choose your animals, and dress accordingly. For example, a cow costume can be easily achieved in white sweats and hoodies with matching slippers, gloves and a hair band or cap with cow ears. If you have any chickens or birds, use the same basic set up, but add a beak that can be attached by elastic or a string that would tie around the back of the performer's head. Get creative, but remember these are cameo roles – a simple headband with animal ears and a scarf as a tail will go a long way.

WILLY WONKA and the **OOMPA-LOOMPAS** come straight from the book, Roald Dahl's "Willy Wonka & the Chocolate Factory." Willy Wonka should be in trousers, a fun button down shirt (a tuxedo shirt is a fun step up!), and a long waist jacket. A bowtie, top hat, and walking stick are key to achieving this look. The bolder the colors, the better. Oompa-Loompas can be dressed in overalls with long sleeve cotton tees underneath. Knee-high socks with zany patterns and slippers are great accents. Last but not least, get matching colored wigs to coordinate the Oompa-Loompas. In general for both, colors, patterns, and bold textures will help signify these iconic characters.



"A Getaway for Spiker and Sponge"



Spiker and Sponge.



"Empire State/The Attack"

The **ANGRY CROWD** can be suited in your everyday English domestic clothes. Boys can be dressed in khakis and button down shirts. Some can wear jackets while others can wear ties. The ladies should wear house dresses like Spiker and Sponge. Accessories such as hats and purses are helpful.

Keep it simple with the **SEAGULLS**: yellow tights or pants with a white top and a strategic feathered headband will get the point across. For the **SHARKS**, head-to-toe gray with a fin attached is fine.

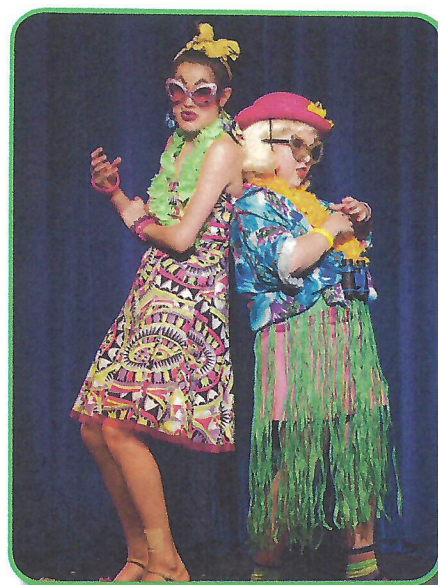
Have fun with your **NEW YORKERS**! You can dress them up as tourists with the trademark "I Love NY" t-shirts, khaki shorts or pants, and caps. Give your actors a couple hand props like cameras, maps, and phones to complete the look. For the corporate New York look, guys and gals can be fitted in more polished Wall Street business attire: suits for guys and pencil skirts and dress shirts for the girls. Truly though, New York is a city with all kinds of people, so feel free to be as diverse with costuming as possible. The **SCREAMING WOMEN** fall under this costume category.

JAKE and **JOE** are seasoned New Yorkers who have seen it all. Put them in beat-up jeans, work boots, neon vests and hard hats as if they work in construction.

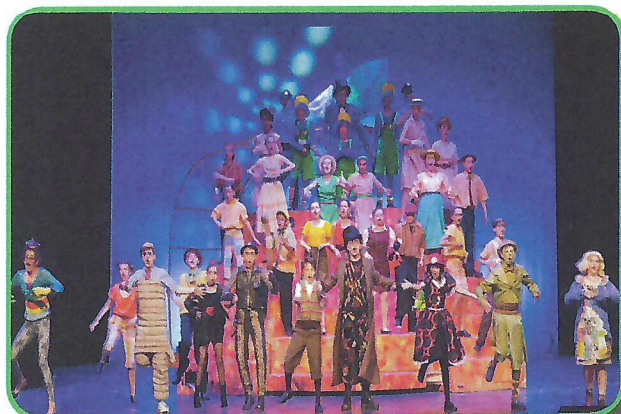
LUCILLE VAN KOOGLESTEIN can be in a simple, dark suit, perhaps with a briefcase and some dark-framed glasses. **BUNNY MACKENZIE THE THIRD** should be in a lovely gown with strands of pearls and possibly a fake fur wrap. Think high-society socialite.



The cruise ship.



"I Got You"



"Welcome Home"