



GATEWAY FROM HOME

Pressing Plants At Home

This guide will teach you how to preserve plants and their flowers! A properly stored plant specimen, like those found in herbaria, can last for hundreds of years and provide valuable scientific information. What plants can you find in your yard to press?

You will need: flowers with leaves and stems attached (or picked separately), paper towels, cardboard or newspaper, heavy books, a warm and dry place, and permission to collect plants if they are not from your own yard – ask a neighbor!

Step 1: Arrange your specimens

Place your flowers and leaves on a paper towel. Be sure that the plants do not overlap with one another and that they are laying just as you would like them to press and dry!



Step 2: Create your press

Select a hard surface like a table or countertop where your press can stay for 2 weeks.

- Lay a piece of cardboard or small stack of newspapers. Place your paper towel with flowers next. Cover the flowers with another paper towel and a new sheet of cardboard or newspaper stack
- Add more layers of paper towels, flowers, and cardboard or newspaper, but don't stack higher than six inches. Be sure your stack is topped with a cardboard or newspaper layer

Step 3: Press your specimens

- Top your stack of paper towels, flowers, and cardboard or newspaper with a few heavy books (dictionaries, phonebooks, and textbooks are great for this!)
- Let your press sit undisturbed for two weeks before you carefully check to see whether your plants are flat and dry. If not, leave them for one more week!

Step 4: Finish and label your specimens!

Carefully remove your beautiful pressed plants. They should be flat, dry, and just how you had arranged them. Place your specimens in a frame, or mount and label them to save your data!

- Apply a small bead of glue to the back of the flower and its stems and leaves, and press them to a sheet of rigid paper
- Glue a label to the paper with information like the collector's name (you!), date and place collected, and plant name

