

Make a Flower Press



For centuries people have been pressing flowers and plants and examining them. Herbariums are books in which dried flowers and plants are pasted into the pages and then descriptions of how to identify the plants and how they can be used are written next to the specimen. Herbariums were records of knowledge about plants that were passed down from generation to generation. Put together this flower press and you can start your own herbarium.

Kit Materials:

- A bag containing the following materials:
 - 2 chipboard squares (these have rounded corners and 2 holes)
 - 2 Cotton squares
 - 2 Cardboard squares
 - 2 Nylon screws
 - 2 Nylon wing nuts
 - 1 Name sheet (with picture of a leaf)
- Glue

Instructions:

1. Glue the cotton squares to the chipboard squares (one on each).
The cotton should be attached right in the middle of each chipboard square and should not block either of the two holes in the cover.
2. Glue one cardboard square onto each of the cotton squares aligning the edges so that they are centered on the cotton. Do this for both sets of chipboard and cotton.
3. Write your name on the name sheet and glue it onto the outside of one of the two assembled sets of materials. This will be the top of the press.
4. Allow everything to dry.

How to Press Flowers

Gathering Specimens -----

- Select plants that will dry well and give you a great result.
- This press can hold specimens that fit in a 3 ½" square, so look for smaller leaves or flowers.
- Choose items that are nearly flat and don't hold a lot of water in them. For leaves, maple and oak are good choices. Look for leaves that are in good condition without any cracks or tears, which are often more visible once they are dried.
- Thin, flat flowers like violets and daisies are a good choice. Pulpy flowers like roses and tulips have too much water although you can press the individual petals of these flowers, which give good results. Remove any excess parts or pollen so there is nothing extra on the page to stain the flower when it is dry.
- Drying times vary, but some can take as long as 2-3 weeks to dry.

How to use your press -----

- Place the top and bottom of the leaf press on a table with the covers face down and the cardboard squares face up.
- Pick up the bottom of the press (the half that doesn't have the leaf picture on it) and insert two screws from the bottom up through the holes and return the bottom to the table.
- Place leaf or flowers of an appropriate size directly on the bottom cardboard (the half with the screws sticking up).
- Place the top half on top of the leaf or flowers with the cardboard side face down. Line up the two halves so that the screws pass through the holes in the top.
- Screw the two wing nuts onto the screws and tighten them equally to apply significant pressure to the press, squeezing the leaf/flower flat.
- It will take from several days up to 2-3 weeks for the leaves/flowers to dry completely depending upon the temperature and the amount of moisture in the leaf/flower.

