

FAIRCHILD TROPICAL BOTANIC GARDEN

Exploring, Explaining and Conserving the World of Tropical Plants

Flower Press Activity

In this activity, you will make a flower pressing, also known as an herbarium specimen. Pressed flowers can be used in arts and crafts projects – to make bookmarks, or cards, or whatever you might imagine. Herbarium specimens are also very important tools to a scientist. When scientists do field research, they collect and preserve specimens of plants they study, like making a plant library.

Materials needed:

- Newspaper
- Corrugated cardboard – cereal boxes work well!
- Heavy books
- Flowers and leaves
- Scissors
- Glue
- Paper or journal to glue specimen to

Directions:

1. Use scissors to carefully cut flowers or leaves from a plant. Try to find leaves and flowers without spots or holes.
2. Place three pieces of newspaper onto a piece of cardboard on your desk.
3. Lay your plant on top of the newspaper. Try to spread out the flower parts so that they can be easily seen and aren't touching each other. Be sure to record the name of your plant somewhere to use later.
4. Put three more sheets of newspaper on top of the plant and cover with another piece of cardboard.
5. You may continue to add layers of cardboard, newspaper and plants into a pile.
6. Place several heavy books on top and place in a cool, dry spot for at least 10-14 days.
7. After about 2 weeks, check your plants to see if they appear dry and crisp. If so, gently remove the dry plants from your press. If not, leave them for another week.
8. Glue onto a sturdy piece of paper or into your journal.
9. You may want to include the following information:
 - Name of plant
 - Date collected
 - Location collected
 - Interesting characteristics of the plant (does it have odor, sap, etc.)
 - Collector's name
10. You may also have fun using your pressed flower specimen for other art projects.

