

Make Your Own Herbarium

A fun family activity to learn and document the botany of your own back yard

1. Find a specimen

Almost any plant can be dried to use as pressed flower art. Whether you are at the beach, in the woods, on a hike in the mountains or in your own backyard, you can find leaves and flowers to dry. Make sure the specimen that you pick is fresh and dry. The best time to go looking is on a sunny morning after the dew has evaporated.

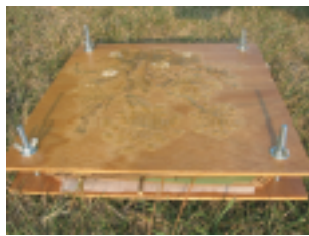
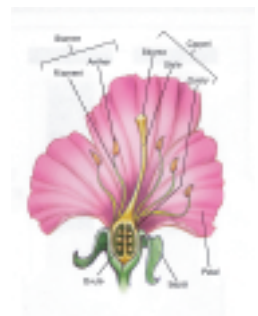


2. Pick a specimen

Use scissors to cut your specimen. Try to collect as much of the plant as possible (i.e. leaves, roots, seeds, flowers, stems) to make identification easier. Don't wait more than a day or two to move on to steps 3 & 4 or your specimen may mold.

3. Identify and classify your plant

Find a plant classification reference book at your local library. Examine all the parts of the plants and compare them to the pages in the book until you find a match. Record the information for each specimen. If you have trouble finding a match, ask an expert.



4. Dry your specimen

Place your specimen between a few newspaper pages. Put the pages in or under a large book or in a flower press. Store it in a dry place for at least a month.

5. Mount and label your specimen

When the specimen is dry, attach it to a piece of paper with paste, tape or pins. Be sure whatever you use does not add additional moisture. Label your specimen with the name (common and Latin), the date, place collected, common uses and any other information you would like to add.



Now you can turn your specimen into a card, bookmark or collect several pages and create an herbarium!