

How to Press a Plant

Once a plant sample is collected, you should press it ASAP. Plant samples will dry out very shortly (sometimes just minutes!) after being collected.



To begin, gather the following materials:

- Newspaper
- Cardboard
- Baking sheets
- Heavy pots and pans

1. Preheat the oven. Spread out a piece of newspaper onto a baking sheet. Carefully arrange the plant sample on the sheet of newspaper. Remember when positioning flowers that they will be flattened during the pressing process, so petals should be carefully and prettily splayed out.

2. Cover the plant sample with another sheet of newspaper. Be careful not to disturb the arrangement you have made. If possible, place a piece of cardboard under and on top of the newspaper. It should look like a cardboard sandwich with newspaper on the inside and cardboard on the outside. If you do not have cardboard, just newspaper will do!

3. Now find the heaviest pots and pans (or other oven-safe equipment) you can to place on top of the cardboard. You want the plant sample to be as flattened as possible. Place the weighted tray into the oven. How long you bake your sample for will depend on how thick your plant sample is, and what type of plant it is. You may want to bake a test sample to determine the right amount of baking time (try starting at 1 hr on 300 degrees).

4. Once your plant sample is done baking, remove the tray from the oven and wait for it to cool. Carefully unwrap your plant and be mindful that delicate parts (e.g. petals and thin stems) tend to stick to the newspaper and must be very carefully peeled off.

After Pressing...

Store pressings in a dry place. You can mount your pressing on paper and frame it to create a beautiful work of art!

Or, you can slip it into a laminated protector and start compiling your own herbarium! (Remember to label your plant with its scientific name!)

