

How to make a homemade mini flower press.



What you will need:

cardboard, blotting paper or paper towels, newspaper, rubber bands or string, heavy books, scissors, card and PVA glue.



use the pictures overleaf to help you put your press together:

Collect your flowers/leaves in the late morning when any excess moisture will have evaporated from them. Small flowers are easier to press but you can also use grasses, ferns, leaves, moss or lichens. Larger flowers are harder to flatten and may have to be cut in half first.



*Make sure you have permission to pick the flowers and only take what you need, damaging the plant as little as possible. Leave plenty for others to enjoy, including the bees! 🐝



Place your flowers/leaves as flat as you can between two sheets of folded newspaper. Arrange them into the position you want them to be in when they are dried. Next, carefully place your newspaper layer (with specimens inside) into a folded layer of more absorbent paper - blotting paper or paper towels. You may need to replace the newspaper or paper towels with fresh paper for several days to make sure all the moisture is removed and the plants don't start to decay. Dandelions for example hold a lot of moisture. And don't forget to press your flowers as soon as possible after collecting so they don't lose colour or shape.



Your final layers will be a top and base of cardboard. Press these layers together and fix them with a couple of rubber bands or some string. You can make more than one press and stack them on top of each other, making sure that you have cardboard in between each layer. Finally, place your mini flower presses underneath some heavy books or bricks and store them in a warm dry place.

OR

You can open up a big heavy book, line the pages with layers of newspaper, and place your flowers as flat as you can inside the book. Again, weigh it down with heavier books or bricks. It will take 2-3 weeks for your plant specimens to dry.



*Make sure you do not disturb the flowers and foliage or remove them from between the sheets of paper during the drying process, otherwise they will wrinkle and lose their colour.



What can I do with my pressed flowers?

You can make pictures with your pressed flowers and leaves - carefully remove them from in between the layers of paper and stick them onto card using small amounts of PVA glue. You could frame these or make cards and bookmarks as gifts.

A herbarium is a collection of dried pressed plant specimens. Why not start your own one in a scrapbook? Don't forget to label the plants and add extra details like the date you collected them and where you collected from. You can start to make a record of what grows in your local area at different times of the year.





Place your plant specimens inside the folded newspaper in the desired position and close it up.



Place your folded newspaper layer inside a folded layer of absorbent paper - blotting paper or paper towels.

Place your layers of paper and plants inside two pieces of cut cardboard, like a sandwich.



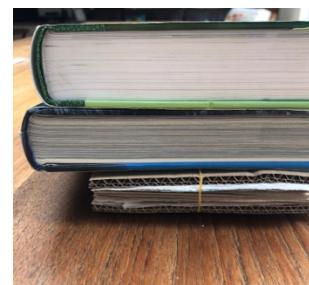
Secure the layers with two rubber bands to keep them firmly closed.



You can stack more than one layer of mini flower presses together.



Weigh them down with some heavy books or a brick.



You can also place your flowers and leaves directly into folded newspaper inside a big heavy book. Weigh this down with more heavy books or a brick.

A dried specimen from the herbarium at the South London Botanical Institute.

