

Make your own Plant Press!

Plant presses are designed to dry and flatten leaves and flowers. Presses were used by early explorers for identification and preservation of new species they encountered on their journey. Today, hobbyists may choose to press plants for use in an array of creative projects.

Materials Needed:

- Two boards of equal size (no smaller than 4"x4" and no larger than 18"x18")
- Cardboard (corrugated)
- Box cutter
- Scissors
- Newspaper
- Belt or bolt/washer/wing nut
- Drill (this will be needed if you use bolts/nuts as your tightening tool).
- Leaves or flowers to press

*Never collect leaves from private property or parks. Be sure to investigate collections procedures/rules at sites before obtaining leaves.



Directions:

1. Cut the two boards the same size. Shape can vary from rectangle, square or even circular.
2. Trace the shape of the board onto the cardboard. Cut out the pieces with a box cutter. Begin with four pieces and cut more as needed. The cardboard will allow air flow to the plants you are pressing.
3. Trace a stack of four or more sheets of newspaper with the board shape. Cut them out with scissors. These will absorb the moisture from the plants.

Assembling plant press:

1. Bottom of press is one of the boards.
2. Place one piece of cardboard on top of bottom board.
3. Place a couple of pieces of newspaper on top of the cardboard.
4. Place your collected plants to be pressed on top of newspaper.
(Note: take time to position plants as you wish for them to be pressed; once dry they are brittle. Succulent plants (large & chunky) do not press well. Use plants/flowers that are flatter in nature, such as violets).
5. Place a couple of pieces of newspaper on top of the plants.
6. Place a piece of cardboard on top of newspaper.
7. Continue layers (newspaper, specimen, cardboard and repeat).
8. Once you have filled your press, place the other board on top.
9. Wrap the belt around the press and cinch it tight (use two belts if you are using a large press). After 24 hours, cinch belts. *
10. Put press in a dry, well-ventilated area.
11. Specimen should be pressed in about three days.

*Instead of a belt, you can also use bolts, washers and wing nuts to tighten your press. After Step one of cutting your boards for the press, drill a hole through the four corners of each piece of wood. As you begin to assemble press, push the bolts up through each hole, so the bolt head is on the bottom (shaft of bolt is pointed up). Once you have placed the layers in your press (cardboard, newspaper, and plants), slide down the top board over the bolts. Finally, place a washer over each bolt and screw down a wing nut. The wing nuts can be tightened as the specimen dry.