

SCIENCE

FROM HOME



Leaf Pressing

The Academy has a large Herbarium of preserved plant specimens. Many are dried to preserve their structure and prevent decay so they can be studied in the future. We can also do a version of this at home by pressing leaves. These leaves can be the start of a collection, used in decoration or fulfill any number of other uses.

Know before you begin

- This activity can be done inside
- All supplies are easy to find
- Adult supervision is recommended
- Please choose a safe space for this activity

Materials

- Flat, undamaged leaves
 - Try to collect different types, colors and shapes for variety
- For Method 1:
 - Newspaper
 - Heavy Books
- For Method 2:
 - An iron and ironing board
 - Wax paper
 - Two rags
 - Scissors

Instructions

Method 1: Weight Pressing

- Place 1 wide, heavy book on a table or the floor.
- Put a layer of newspaper on top of it, followed by the leaves.
 - Be sure not to have the leaves overlap or stick outside of the edges of the newspaper.
- Carefully put another layer of newspaper on top of the leaves, followed by another wide, heavy book.
- Layer several more heavy books on top, trying to distribute the weight evenly.

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- Check the leaves after 1 week. If they are in good shape, continue for another 1-2 weeks before collecting them for use or display.

Method 2: Ironing

Note: This method will seal the leaves in the wax paper.

- Place a rag on your ironing board
- Cut a sheet of wax paper that is long enough to fold over all the leaves you want to press.
- Place a sheet of wax paper on top of the towel
- Add leaves, then fold over the wax paper
 - Be sure the leaves are separated and not sticking outside of the paper
- Place another rag on top of the wax paper.
- Heat your iron to high, do not use any steam.
- Evenly pass the iron over the rag to seal the wax paper. Do not press too hard, it will move the leaves.
- Once sealed, finish by holding the iron in place for a few seconds across the entire surface. This should preserve the leaves and make them visible.
- Check the paper, re-iron any missed areas.
- Let cool.
- Cut the leaves out the paper. Be sure to leave a little bit of space along the edges.
- Enjoy!