

Plant Art Through Plant Pressing
How To Collect and Use A Press Plant
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Overview: Hands on is the best education any student or educator can obtain in botany/ethnobotany. Pressing flowers, herbs, or plants is another way of learning about the species and structures of the plant and the diversity of them.

Objectives: To create your own plant press (using a web site listed) through various methods, and how to collect the plants to be pressed. This is a fun way of creating a herbarium for your collection.

Key Concepts: Food Webs, Predator-Prey Relations, Ecological Niches, etc.
Subjects: Social Studies, biology, Ecology, Geography, Botany, etc.
Duration: 4 class periods (80 minutes)
Setting: In the field, outdoor natural landscape and in the classroom
Season: Spring – early, just at budburst
Interdisciplinary Connections
Frameworks:

Environmental Education @ the Cove River Site, and other coastal Connecticut settings.



*Produced by the Graduate Students in
 Environmental Education EVE 546 Spring 2009*



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Introduction | Engagement:

Botany/ethnobotany can be fun and educational at the same time. Learning about plants through the art of pressing plants is one of the ways that

was developed by an 18th century Swedish naturalist, Carolus Linneaus. He referred to them as herbarium vivum, which means a collection of plants or parts of a plant, picked from a meadow, woodland, or garden and mounted for permanent display and reference.

Materials: The materials needed for this lesson are:

- ❖ A stack of old newspapers.
- ❖ Ordinary blotting paper
- ❖ Small Trowel or small garden shovel
- ❖ Pruning Shears
- ❖ Two pieces of 11x14 in. of plywood
- ❖ Two old belts, strong twine, or
- ❖ Two straps with tension buckles.
- ❖ Pair of garden gloves
- ❖ Copy of the 6 steps to press flowers and leaves.
- ❖ Collection of plants from the school ground, Cove, or backyard

Preparation: Handout copies of the 6 steps to press flowers and leaves. Read it the day before collecting flowers, plants, and/or leaves.

Explanation: This activity is part of the hands on methodology of learning plants. In creating a herbarium one must search, collect, identify, press, and dry plants in order to learn the diversification of plants.

Explore: Plants reveal their structure and offer themselves as a resource in research of individual species to show various characteristics from the same family that can be confused due to similarities in their appearance.

Activity #1: Collect a flowering specimen by using a small trowel to dig up by its roots and place in a plastic bag. Pruning shears can also be used to clip a branch with shoots and leaves and berries on it (a teacher should perform this task). For this task, a pair of garden gloves should be worn to avoid skin contacts with poison ivy or skin scratches. At the gathering site, make notes about the specimen. Bring back to class and identify it using your Wild Flower Guide.

Activity #2: In the classroom, identify the plant that you chose for your pressing, make out a

3x5-note card with the description, scientific name, and common name, and site where it came from. Handle the plants or flowers carefully preventing any breakage, wrinkling, or drying out of the specie. Keep them in the plastic bag until they are ready to be pressed.

Evaluation: Have the students read through the 6-step guide to construct the plant press for the class. Class cooperation is the key to building the press. Following instructions is important to create the proper herbarium. Their product will be the evaluation of the lesson.

Reference Peterson's Field for Wild Plants
Magic and Medicine of Plants;Readers
Digest

<http://www.preservedgardens.com/how-to-press.htm>

<http://www.wikihow.com/Press-Flowers-and-Leaves>

