

# PLANT PRESS TECHNIQUES

1. Open your plant press and number in pencil the corner of each sheet of blotter paper.
2. Carefully snip representative samples of flowers and leaves you find attractive or interesting. It is best to avoid pressing leaves that contain a lot of fluid such as succulents.
3. After you have collected your specimens, lay each one flat, without creases, on the plant press blotter paper. (Note: If you cannot press the specimens immediately, place them in a vase with fresh water.) When ready to press the plants, arrange each one so that the specimens are not folded or overlapping.
4. In your nature journal, you can record the blotter number and information about the plant (date collected, location, shade/sun, height of plant, color and shape of leaf/flower when fresh, presence of any insects on the plant, the name of the plant if known, and any other interesting information).
5. Repeat the process for the rest of your specimens. Sandwich the entire set between the two boards and secure with rubber bands (or straps). Place the press in the warmest, driest place you can find (but not in the oven) for approximately two weeks.
6. After that time remove the bands or straps and carefully transfer each specimen to your botany notebook, mounting cards, or other loose-leaf binder with sheets of heavy white paper. You can use clear scotch tape or glue to secure the specimens on the paper. From your nature notebook transfer the information about the plant.
7. If possible, re-visit the same collection site at different times of the year in an effort to record the full life cycle of the plants being studied. For each specimen, try to get a complete set of leaves, flowers and seeds.
8. Pressed flowers and leaves can also be used to make beautiful arrangements on note cards and collages. You could make a representative collage for each of the environments from which you collected the specimens.