



How to Press and Dry Flowers (and Leaves!)



by jessyratfink

There are many ways to preserve flowers and leaves, but I tend to go with ways that use things I have around the house! In this case that means using paper, string, books, and possibly clothespins.

The only catch with this is that you need patience. Flowers can take anywhere from 2-6 weeks to dry completely, depending on the thickness of the flower and the humidity and temperature in your

environment.

In this instructable, I'll teach you how to press and hang flowers to dry. I'll also explain which technique is best depending on the type of flowers you have. I have yet to find a leaf I need to hang to dry - I always press those!



Step 1: Tools + Materials

Tools:

- A stack of books
- Printer or tissue paper
- Scissors
- String and/or clothespins

Materials:

- Fresh flowers and/or leaves

Try to make sure your flowers are nice and fresh. Any blemish they have will show up even more when dried! For help with this, check out [How to Make Flowers Last Longer](#). :)



Step 2: Which Types of Flowers Are Best for Hanging or Pressing?

This all depends on how the flower is connected to the stem! This area of the flower is called the receptacle and contains the flower's major organs. (For a full look at flower anatomy, [click here!](#))

Flowers with large receptacles (roses, peonies, hydrangeas, dahlias, carnations, etc.) are best dried by hanging as they don't want to lay flat while drying.

Flowers with small, flat receptacles (violets, daisies,

pansies, zinnias, etc.) are great for pressing in books. They're easy to work with and will lay nice and flat without extra work.

While this is the rule of thumb I go by, feel free to dry your flowers however you like! I've dried large flowers in books before and also hung flat ones to dry. Sometimes it works out, sometimes it doesn't!



Step 3: Pressing Flowers

This is by far my favorite method of pressing flowers and leaves! I have a huge library of books with tons of flowers and leaves in them. I have a bad habit of sticking something I want to press into a book and then forgetting which book I put it in, so sometimes I get a nice surprise when I pull a book out. :D

To press flowers, you'll need:

- A stack of books
- Scissors
- Fresh flowers
- Printer or tissue paper



Step 4: Cut Off the Stem (Optional)

The first step! You'll want to remove the stem right at the base of the flower in many cases. The stems hold quite a bit of water and can slow down the drying process. However, do whatever looks best to you!

Once that's done, lay your flowers out on a clean surface and get ready to press!



Step 5: Getting the Flowers Into the Books

Once the stems are cut off, grab a piece of paper. Fold it in half so it fits nicely in the book.

Open the paper and add a couple flowers to it, making sure they're laying nice and flat. (Place them petals up or down - whichever way they lay the best!) Fold the paper back over and stick it in the middle of a book.

Repeat as needed - but make sure to only put a few flowers in each book. You don't want to warp the spines of your books! :)

IMPORTANT: If you're pressing really vibrant flowers, you may want to add a second piece of paper. As the flowers dry, they may leech some of their color onto the pages of the book.



Step 6: Stack the Books and Wait

Once the flowers are in the books, I stack them and add a few more books on top for extra weight.

The books might stack a little weirdly at first (see the open spaces in the pages?), but as the flowers flatten out and dry that problem will right itself. :)

And now the hardest part: waiting!

Depending on the temperature and humidity where

you live, you'll want to leave the flowers to dry in the books for 2-6 weeks. I live in the mountains in Colorado, so I only needed to leave mine a couple weeks thanks to the low humidity!

Be careful when checking to see if your flowers or leaves are dry. Before they're entirely dry, they may stick to the paper. Open the papers carefully and slowly to avoid losing any petals or leaves.



Step 7: Hanging Flowers to Dry

This is my other preferred method of drying - not only does it work great, but it also looks and smells nice. :D

This method is very similar to the way that fresh herbs are dried.

To hang flowers to dry, you'll need:

- String or twine
- Clothespins
- Fresh flowers
- Scissors

One thing to consider here is the number of flowers you bundle together to dry. Individual flowers (as shown in the photos) left to dry on their own will dry faster and shrink more. If you tie a few flowers together in a bundle, they will dry out slower thanks to the slightly higher humidity and they'll also shrink less.

However, be careful to not tie too many flowers together - this can cause molding to happen!

Much like pressing flowers, this is an exercise in waiting. Depending on the temperature and humidity, the flowers should dry in 1-3 weeks.



Step 8: Enjoy Your Dried Flowers and Leaves!

While I mostly dry flowers and leaves for sentimental reasons, there are also loads of crafts you can use them in! Have a look at Pinterest for ideas, and make sure to share any fantastic ideas you have in the comments. :D

