Pressed Flowers and Leaves as Horticultural Therapy
Overview

An activity designed around sensory play to help release stress using elements from the natural world. Pressing flowers and leaves provides a therapeutic outlet, and the opportunity to connect to the land. You can use your samples to make a guide of the plants growing around your home or favorite park. You can even use them to inspire art projects like greeting cards to send to your loved ones you miss most.

Pressing plants can be as simple as setting flowers between the pages of books to dry them, or there are even pre made plant presses for purchase. Making a plant press from scratch can be a lot of fun, as you can mostly likely find all of the material necessary already at home.
Craft Materials

White glue thinned with water or Mod Podge

Heavy paper: notecards or sizeable card stock

Pressed flowers and leaves

Clear contact paper (optional protection)
Step One

Pick your desired location to collect plant material. Use scissors to harvest flowers and leaves. Keep in mind that small, flat flowers press easier than bulky ones. Press individual petals for larger flowers. Collecting flowers at different stages of development can add an extra layer to the creative process for your display.
Step Two

If you are unable to harvest and press your gathered plant parts in the same day, wrapping the stems in a wet paper towel and storing them in a plastic bag in a dark place will help prevent much wilting. Another option is to put your plants in a phonebook or catalog before moving them over to your plant press (You can leave plants in a phone book for the duration of the pressing process, but a system that enables air movement speeds up the drying process and better preserves color and a dried plant specimen).
Step Three

The interior of your plant press will contain alternating layers of plants arranged on newspaper and corrugated cardboard. Cardboard enables air circulation while the newspaper absorbs moisture. Sandwich your plant matter between a sheet or two of your folded newspaper without touching. Add your next layer of cardboard, newspaper, and plant parts on top and repeat until you have all of your material arranged properly in your plant press.
Step Four

Finally, place wooden boards on either side of your layered pile to provide structure and bind and tighten, or weight the stack to provide pressure that will help the plants to dry. Leave your press in a warm and ventilated location.
Plywood board
Cardboard
Newspaper
Belts with cinches
Plant specimen
Step Five

Plants should adequately dry in 10-14 days. In the occasion that you find they are still moist, change/add a layer of newspaper around them. Note that when moist, some delicate plants will stick to the surface they are on.
Getting creative with your pressed plants
Step One

Lay out your pressed flowers in preparation to organize them on your greeting card.
Step Two

Organize your flowers on your greeting card in the way you plan to secure them with glue. This step is important because the flowers are difficult to move once you have administered the glue.
Step Three

Set up your gluing station using either Mod Podge as displayed, or watered down white Elmer’s glue. Paint your glue onto your greeting cards and secure your flowers.
Step Four

Once your glue has dried after securing your flowers, brush a top layer of glue over your flowers to further protect your project. As soon as your glue has dried, your greeting cards are ready to be written out and sent to your loved ones.
Have Fun!

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