



Contains:

- 7" Flower Press
- 6 Paints and 2 Paintbrushes
- Tweezers
- Personal Note Cards
- Gift Tags
- Hole Punch
- Craft Glue
- Craft Accessories
- Corrugated Cardboard
- Blotter Paper

The origin of flower pressing dates back hundreds of years when the process was used to preserve flowers so they could be studied. Today it is a very popular activity to create your own preserved flowers that are great for mounting or framing in a variety of decorative ways. The following guidelines will help you get started so you can create all kinds of lovely floral projects.

Some Tips Before You Start:

- Always tell an adult when you are going out exploring nature; they may want to come with you.
- Do not pick flowers from anyone's garden without their permission.
- Be gentle when picking your flowers. Don't pull them out of the ground as this will destroy the plant for future growth.
- Try to pick flowers that aren't wet or damaged.
- Some flowers that are great for pressing are Forget-Me-Nots, Violets, Daisies, Lilies of the Valley, Lilacs, Ivy, Ferns, Clover and many more. Flat flowers and leaves work best, but experiment and have fun!

GET READY!

Gathering Flowers

Most any type of flower or leaf is suitable for pressing. You can use flowers from your backyard garden, a cut floral arrangement or a nature walk in the countryside.

- Try to pick your flowers during mid-morning or mid-afternoon to avoid the moisture of morning dew and the dryness of strong afternoon sun.
- Collect flowers that will best fit the size of your press and remember that flatter, less bulky flowers will press better.
- Have an adult help you cut the stems with sharp scissors or a knife as cleanly as you can so they don't get crushed.
- Try to press your flowers as soon as possible after picking to preserve their original color. You may even want to bring your press with you on your walk and press the flowers right away. You can keep the press loose until you get home where you can then neatly arrange the flowers and tighten up your press.

GET SET!

Decorate and Assemble Your Flower Press

- Prepare a work area for painting by covering a table with an Alex® Drop Cloth or some newspapers to protect the surface. Lay out your paints, brushes, flower press, a cup of water for rinsing your brushes and a paper towel to blot your brushes dry. Now you can paint the top of your flower press! Use the one on the box as a guide or make up your own design. Remember, you can also glue on flowers that you've pressed yourself! Let your press dry thoroughly before you assemble it.
- To assemble your press, use the photo on the box as a guide and place a washer on each bolt, then pass the bolts through the holes on the wooden bottom piece of the press, (the wooden piece that you didn't paint).
- Stack the cardboard and blotting paper until all the pieces are used.
- Place your decorated top piece onto the bolts and place a washer and a wing nut on each bolt. Screw down the wing nuts to tighten your press.

GO!

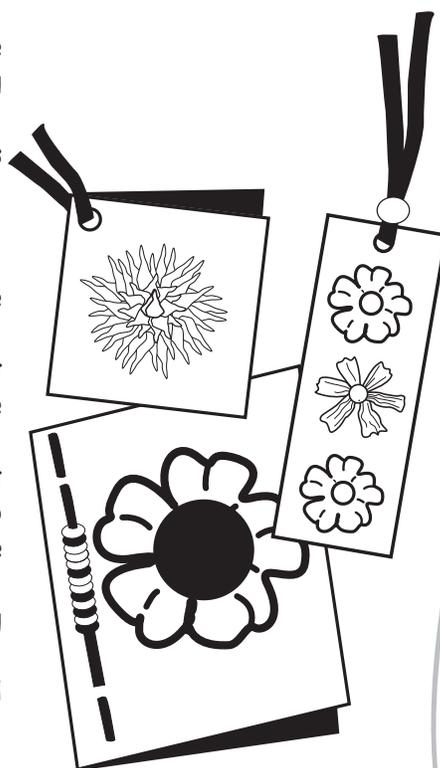
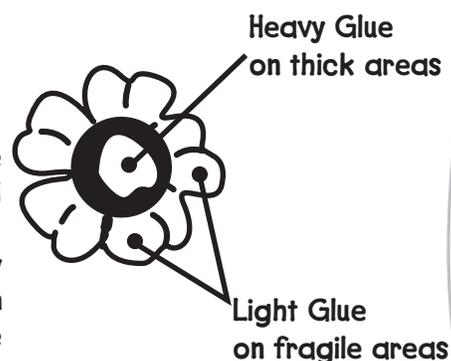
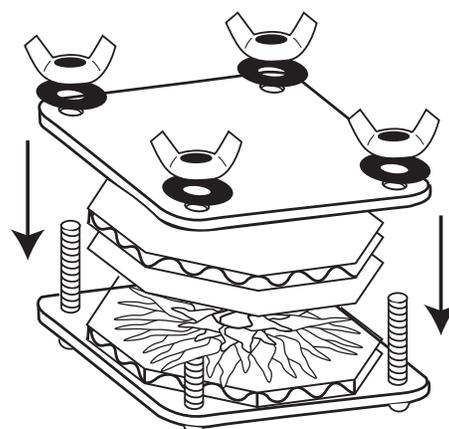
Using Your Flower Press

- Open the press by unscrewing the wing nuts and removing the decorated cover, cardboard, and paper sheets. Place one cardboard sheet and one piece of blotter paper on top of the wooden bottom.
- Arrange your flowers to be pressed on the blotting paper so they don't touch each other. For best results, the thickness of the flowers on each layer should be similar. When you are satisfied with the arrangement of petals and stems, place another piece of blotter paper on the layer of flowers followed by another sheet of cardboard.
- Repeat the sequence of layers until your press is full and place the decorative wood cover over the bolts. Then add the washers and wing nuts and tighten them down until the layers are pressed firmly together.
- Continue to tighten the wing nuts a little more each day until the flowers are completely dry (the drying process takes about 3 weeks).

Project Ideas

Your pressed flowers will be fragile, so handle them with care using the tweezers from your kit.

- To mount your flowers, use the white craft glue and carefully apply it with a paint brush to the thickest part of the flower. Gently brush the glue out onto the thinner areas and set in place.
- Try making note cards, bookmarks and gift tags. You can even mount pressed flowers to a lamp shade for a beautiful unique look (be sure to ask permission before starting this project). Your flowers can also be mounted on paper and framed under glass for a decorative picture.
 - Add ribbons and beads to your cards and bookmarks as a finishing touch. Look at the box for some great ideas.
 - Finished mounted flowers can be protected with a coat of watered down glue if desired.



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