Pressing Plants

Instructions for pressing plants

1) Choose a plant specimen to press.

2) Put your plant inside a folded piece of newspaper.

3) If you are collecting a scientific specimen include notes about what the plant is, and where and when it was collected. Note the specific habitat you found it in, like a pond, the side of the road, or your backyard near the fence. Add details about the plant that may not last after pressing, like smell and color.

4) Put a few pieces of newspaper in each side of the folded piece to absorb moisture.

5) Put all of the newspaper with the plant in the middle in between the two pieces of cardboard.

6) Tie the strap around the cardboard tightly so it presses the plant flat.

7) At home, put the press under some heavy books to help flatten the plants.

8) Change the newspaper every few days until the plants are dried, then use them for art!

Collection Rules

- Make sure you have permission to collect the plant: collecting in Regional, Provincial or National Parks is NOT allowed without written permission.

- Since collection kills the plant, make sure that the purpose of collecting is worth this loss of life.

- Collect less than 5% of what is present (1 in 20 plants). If something is rare, take pictures instead!

- If something is a weed, collect as much as you want but be careful to prevent the seeds from spreading, and to minimize soil disturbance (weeds love freshly dug soil).

Plant Pressing Tips

- Press the plants right after collecting. The faster it dries the better the result.

- Try to collect all the parts needed to identify the plant: stem, leaves, roots, flowers and fruit.

- Lay out the plants in the press how you want them to look. Try to show both the top and the bottom of a leaf. If the plant doesn’t cooperate right away, readjust it after an hour of pressing.

- Thick, juicy fruits or roots may need to be sliced into sections to dry properly.