

# COLLECTING AND PRESSING WILDFLOWERS

## COLLECTING WILDFLOWERS

- Never collect wildflowers from public lands, preserves, or protected natural areas. If you're collecting on private land, be sure to get permission from the landowner first. Don't stop along busy highways and roads—by doing so, you create potential hazards both for yourself and others.
- Always identify wildflowers before picking them. Most areas have comprehensive wildflower field guides that will help you learn the local flora.
- Never collect endangered species; to find out which species are endangered in your state, contact your state Natural Heritage Program.
- Beware of any poisonous plants that may occur in your area—such as poison ivy, poison oak, and stinging nettles—and avoid them! Many poisonous plants have harmless look-alikes. Be sure you can determine the differences, or avoid both of them altogether.
- Do not pick a flower if it's the only one in a particular spot! Find a large population and only pick a few flowers.
- Try not to trample other plants or otherwise disturb the area as you collect.
- Place cut flowers in buckets of water or an ice chest to transport them home, or press them in the field as you collect (see directions following).
- Bring a notebook to record the location, collection date, habitat description, and any other details you may need for later records.

## PRESSING AND MOUNTING WILDFLOWERS AND NATIVE PLANTS

### Materials Needed:

- \*White paper (typing or computer paper)
- \*Newspaper
- \*Corrugated cardboard (channels should run the width of the piece to aid ventilation)
- \*Wooden plant press, or heavy boxes, books or bricks
- \*Elmer's glue
- \*Clear tape
- \*Paper towels (untextured)
- \*Toothpicks
- \*Needle and cotton quilting thread
- \*Artist's natural bristle brush (size 505)



*Lady Bird Johnson*

**Wildflowercenter**

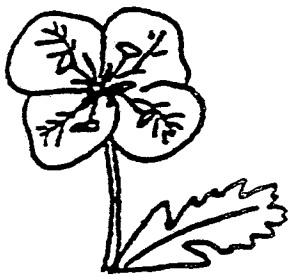


Figure A



Figure B

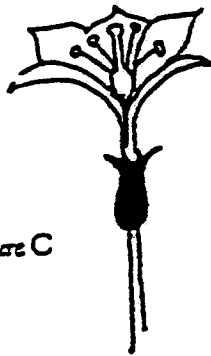


Figure C

Figure D

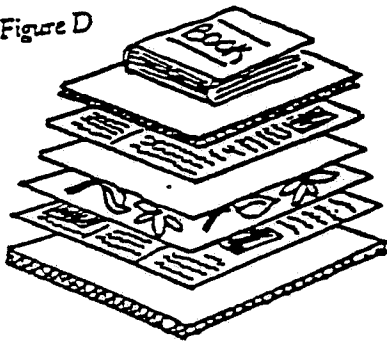


Figure E

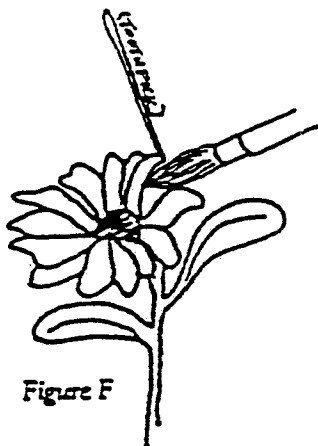
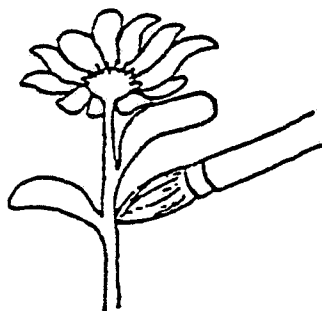


Figure F

### Pressing Plants:

1. Pick a flower that is dry. Make sure you have the plant's roots as well.
2. Place the plant on white paper (do not use newspaper because the ink will come off on the plant) and lay the leaves and petals flat.
3. If you are collecting flowers for the herbarium, always press extra flowers, in case of errors or accidents! Also in this case try to gather many of the same type of flower in different poses. **(Figures A, B, and C)**
4. Place a second sheet of white paper on top of your plant, and then sandwich it between two pieces of cardboard. **(Figure D)**
5. Weigh the specimens down with heavy boxes or books if you don't have a wooden plant press.
6. Place the specimens in a well-ventilated area to dry. **DO NOT** put plants in an oven, even at low temperatures! Plants that dry too quickly can turn brown or become brittle.
7. The plants should dry in four to five days.

### To Mount Plants:

1. When the plant is dry, gently remove it from the press. Place it on a strong piece of paper or cardboard on which you want to display it.
2. Indicate on your page the top and bottom of your flower.
3. Lay the plant face down on the paper, and squeeze out a bit of glue (about the size of a penny) onto a piece of scrap or wax paper
4. Dip an artist's brush into the glue and paint the specimen on all flat surfaces. **DO NOT** paint the petals, just the leaves and stems. Too much glue is more of a problem than too little—coat lightly! **(Figure E)**
5. Carefully place your flower onto the sheet. Wipe off any extra glue.
6. Carefully lift each petal with a toothpick and apply glue to the paper directly under the petal. **(Figure F)**
7. Cover the plant with a sheet of wax paper to prevent it from sticking to the overlaying paper. Add a layer of folded newspaper for padding, then a sheet of cardboard forming a stack. Add some books to hold it down. Allow a few hours for drying.