

Make Your Own Herbarium

It's spring on the Vineyard and you're stuck at home during a pandemic! PHA founder Polly Hill would have said that it is the perfect time to learn something new. So why not learn some more about plants?

One way to learn about spring flowers you find in your yard is to create a scrapbook of plants, called an herbarium. Just like an aquarium, which allows you to observe and study organisms that live in water, an herbarium allows you to look closely and study a plants leaves, flowers, and sometimes roots. It's easy, fun, and can be a lifelong record of what plants grew in your yard in the spring of 2020.



Note: It is very important to get permission from your parents (if you are harvesting in your own yard) or the owner of the land where you would like to cut plant specimens.

Age group

All ages

Materials

- A pile of old newspapers
- Four sheets of heavy cardboard
- 2 or 3 old bricks, rocks, or heavy books
- Index cards and pencils
- Scissors for cutting samples of plants
- 8.5x11" sheets of heavy paper
- Glue
- A folder
- A guidebook to local plants
- The iNaturalist smartphone app



Directions

Watch your flowering plants and trees for when there are both flowers and leaves on the plant. This makes it more interesting!

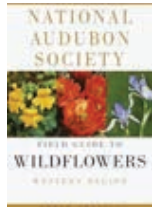
Collecting: Start with one plant, in case you make a mistake! With your scissors, cut a plant at its base, so you have a sample of leaves, stem, and flowers. Make sure it will fit on



Directions continued...

your 8.5x11" paper, along with the index card for information.

Using a field guide or your mom, dad, or a plant lover, identify your plant. This is where the iNaturalist app can help. It identifies plants for you based on a photograph.

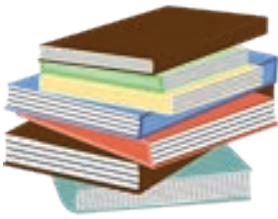


Recording your information: Fill out your index card with the following information:

Your name *Plant name* *Location where you found it* *Date collected*

Description (include colors, height, anything else you thing might be of interest)

Drying your herbarium specimen: Once you have a specimen, you will need to dry it out thoroughly:



1. Find a safe place on a shelf, table, or bench to leave your specimen for a couple of weeks to dry. The area should have good air circulation to carry away moisture.
2. Lay down two layers of heavy cardboard, and spread out some newspapers over them.
3. Put your specimen between about 10 layers of newspaper, and remember to keep your information label with it.
4. Once you have added the top layer of newspaper, weight it down evenly with your bricks, stones, or books.
5. After a week, have a look at your specimen. If it feels very dry then you're ready to mount the leaves on the white paper. If not, repeat for another week.

Create the first page of your herbarium!

Once your specimen is very dry, you are ready to affix it to your paper. Carefully choose how to position your specimen so you can also fit your information label. Use glue to attach the specimen to the sheet, and make sure to stick it on well. Glue your information card to the same piece of paper. Traditionally these are placed in the lower right corner of the sheet, but you can do it however you like.

Which plants will you create specimens of for the next pages of your herbarium book? Have fun!

