

Week 3:
Capturing A Floral Mood and Moment:
Pressing Flowers

There's a long tradition of assigning meanings to specific plants, flowers, and herbs across many cultures in human history. Most famous of these in contemporary US culture is the Victorian "language of flowers." But plants also have deeply personal meanings: picking Black-Eyed Susans with your best friend, planting pansies with your grandparent, or wearing roses at your wedding. Pressing plants and flowers preserves not only their beauty, but also the memories and emotions they evoke.

What will your arrangement mean to you?

Materials:

- Plastic baggie with paper towel
- Wax paper
- Coffee filter
- One container of glue
- One toothpick (Q-tips also work)
- Flowers, herbs, or other fresh greenery for pressing

Gathering Plants:

Educate yourself on poison ivy (leaves of three, let it be!) and ticks. Stick to established paths. Stay hydrated, apply sunscreen as needed, and be safe. Do not eat any unknown plant!

Crumple the paper towel in your plastic baggie and wet it with cold water. Place gathered plants stem-down into the bag, so they stay cool and fresh.

Look for materials on walks outside, in your yard, or make friends with neighbors who have an abundance of blooms, asking if they could share a few. You can buy from local farms and businesses, or use the plants provided at the library. Note: you'll need less than you think!

When harvesting plants, it is important to only take at most 1/10 of what is available, leaving 90% behind; if there are less than ten, you shouldn't take any. Don't forget herbs like mint or dill and greenery like ferns and leaves can also provide meaning, beauty, and scent.

Pressing Instructions:

1. Lay the wax paper down on a flat surface — the classic choice is either on top of a flat book or on one open page of a book.
2. Arrange your flowers on half of the paper in a single layer, either in your final design or at random. You can always re-arrange them later.
3. Lay the coffee filter on top to absorb moisture and fold the wax paper over, then close the book/place another flat object on top. Add more heavy objects as desired.
4. Wait a week at least until dry. (It's ok, and possibly inevitable, to check on them.)
5. Arrange your materials on a nice sheet of paper. Using the toothpick dipped in glue, lightly dot the back of each and gently press into place.

To earn your TWO raffle tickets:

Post a picture of your flowers at any pressing stage on *your* social media and tag us, making sure your post is public. Find us on Facebook and X @ewmlibrary, on Instagram @ehlibrary.

-OR-

Send a picture to kschapiro@ewmlibrary.org with "Take and Make" in the email subject line.

