



BRUCE MUSEUM

DIGITAL WEEKENDS: PRESSED FOR TIME

Herbarium Sheets:

In 2018-2019, the Bruce Museum created an exhibition that highlighted striking pieces from our science collection: herbarium sheets. Herbarium sheets are a collection of pressed plants that people can use to study botanical specimens. Plant collecting were popular pastime among many people, from hobbyist to scientist alike, in the late 19th century.

Herbarium sheets are relatively simple to make. To begin, botany enthusiasts would walk in local parks, forests, and natural places to find different plants and foliage. Once a desired specimen of a plant was found, the finder would write down important information about the specimen, like the date, location, and species of the plant. Then, the plant collected, brought home and pressed between the pages of a book with additional weight if needed until fully dried and flat. Once the specimen was dry, it would be attached to a sheet of paper for preservation, study, and display. Some herbarium sheets are over a 100 years old, providing plant lovers and researcher valuable information today.



Resurrection Fern, Royal State Reservation, FL, 1944.
Collected by Paul G. Howes. Bruce Museum Collection.

Vocabulary:

Herbarium Sheet: a dried plant specimen mounted on a sheet of paper.

Plant: a large group of living things that use sunlight to make their own food. Most plants have leaves, stems, roots, and either flowers or cones.

Flower: a flower is the part of a plant that blossoms. Flowers produce seeds that can become new plants.

Specimen: an individual animal, plant, piece of a mineral, etc., used as an example of its species or type for scientific study or display.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN:

Visit this link to read more about the exhibition: [Pressed for Time: Botanical Collecting as Genteel Pastime or Scientific Pursuit](#)

Materials:

- Flower/Plant specimens (Look for flowers/plants that aren't really wet or need extra prep)
- Parchment Paper



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- Book/Journal (Chose one appropriate to the size of the specimen you chose)
- Heavy weighted object (like a paper weight)
- Tape
- Ruler

DIRECTIONS:

Prep:

Ask an adult to help you find all the materials listed above. Go outside and collect some plants! As a note, when you go to collect your specimens be careful in what you choose and be respectful of other peoples plants. Make sure to have an adult help you find something safe in, or around, your yard if possible. Make sure to avoid [poison ivy](#), which is a plant that has three leaves, with one large leaf and two smaller leaves. If you don't have an item listed, get creative and use something else from around your house. Some other items you can use include tracing paper or printer paper instead of parchment paper. Make sure to clear a space where you and your adult can do this activity.

STEP 1:

Begin by looking at the photo above of the herbarium sheet *Resurrection Fern*. Have you ever seen this plant or something similar? Have you ever collected this plant or any plants before? Spend some time thinking about those plants and ask yourself which one was your favorite. Once you have done that, it is time to get started.

STEP 2:

Watch teaching artist Grayson Kennedy as she begins pressing her flowers. If you cannot collect plants outside, create your own plant.. Try using unique and interesting objects to create your plant. Don't be afraid to draw your plant if you want to do that instead.

STEP 3:

Grab your paper (parchment/tracing/printer) and cut two sheets to the exact size of the book you will use to press your plant. Take a ruler and measure the height and width of the book and then trace the size of the book on the paper. Cut to size.

STEP 4:

Put the plant you chose on top of the paper in the book. Then cover it with the other sheet of paper you cut.

STEP 5:

Flatten the papers in the book with your hands, then close the book.

STEP 6:

Place a heavy weights on top of the closed book. A good example of this is a paper weight, or book, but use what you have around the house.

STEP 7:



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Check back on your flower a week later! It takes several days for the flower to completely dry. Once it is dry, open up the book and tape down your pressed plant to a sheet of paper. Write down with a pen, or pencil, any important information about your plant on the page it is taped to, like the date you found it and where you found it.

STEP 8:

Once you are done with your herbarium sheet, share it with your friends and family. You and your adult can also share your herbarium sheet with our hashtag #BruceMuseum.

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