

# URBAN FARMER

LOVE THE EARTH

## How to press and preserve flowers and leaves:

In addition to growing vegetables and flowers in your garden and harvesting those to either consume in meals or display in a beautiful bouquet, there are other ways to make use of flowers and the flower leaves before they dry up and die for the season. One example of this is called pressing, a method which preserves flowers and leaves for decoration.

When they are pressed and preserved correctly, the flowers or leaves may have wonderful decorating or craft purposes later on. You could use them in arrangements, scrapbooks or more.

### How to preserve flowers and leaves:

The first step in preserving your flowers or leaves is choosing materials that are relatively flat and not blooms or leaves that are overly curled or oddly shaped. When using flowers, pick ones that have recently bloomed and aren't old. If using leaves, use ones that are not spotted or bumpy, because the textures makes it more difficult to press the materials.

The most common and simplest method of pressing leaves and flowers is doing so with weight. This is commonly done with a book. However, pressing the flowers or leaves this way will not preserve them for as long as some of the other methods. Choose petals or leaves with a low moisture content and lay them between newspaper or waxed paper. Then lay a heavy book on top for about one week.

Another way to preserve items like petals or leaves is with waxed paper and an iron,



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which will keep the leaves preserved for months. Layer the leaves or petals between two sheets of waxed paper. Then, cover the ironing board with an old rag so as not to get wax on your board. Then, place the leaves or petals on top of the rag and another rag on top of the waxed paper. Use an iron heated to high, but do not use steam. Run the iron over the leaves, and once the paper has sealed, let the weight of the iron sit on top of the leaves or petals for 4 to 5 seconds each. Once the waxed paper has cooled, you can cut out the individual leaves to display.

You can also use a microwave to press your flowers and leaves. Do so by placing the items face down on parchment paper and then putting another piece of parchment paper on top of the flowers or leaves. Then, put the paper layering in the microwave and place a plate on top. Microwave the items for 30 seconds to a minute. Check the results and repeat until you are happy with how dry the flowers or leaves are.



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