

How to collect and process leaves & flowers

This is an activity that encourages people outdoors! It explores creativity and encourages the handling of plants. It will stimulate conversation and increase physical activity of participants.

What you will need:

Carrier bag for leaves, flowers

Scissors

Kitchen paper, heavy books (weights to flatten leaves)

Step 1: Collecting plant material

On outings to parks and gardens or even around the locality of your care centre, look for flat leaves which still have their colour as these will be easier to press and use.

Pick in dry weather to aid preservation.

Collect a selection of shapes and sizes.

Always just take a few and leave plenty at any one location.

Flowers can also be picked to press. Choose ones that are fairly flat e.g. wild roses rather than tubular



Step 2 Processing leaves and flowers

Leaves and flowers need to be processed on the same day as collecting, before they dry out and start shrivelling up.

Spread them out flat between layers of kitchen paper, well spaced out. The kitchen paper will absorb any moisture in the plant material and prevent rotting.

Once you have a stack of kitchen paper/pressed leaves,/flowers use a heavy book or two on top. This weight is critical to getting nice flat dried specimens.

Store in a cool dry place until needed.

Leaves may need up to 4 weeks to fully dry out., flowers may take up to 6.

There are many activities in which you can use dried leaves, flowers and seeds— word games to stimulate thinking, greetings cards, seed displays, seed bombs and gift tags - see further Fact Sheets.