

Plant Press

Overview:

Create a plant press using cardboard and newspaper.

Objectives:

Learn the different parts of a plant. Identify some common plants of Iowa.

Links to Iowa Core:

Life Science (Grades 3-5): Students will understand and apply knowledge of organisms and their environments, including structures, characteristics, and adaptations of organisms that allow them to function and survive within their habitats.

Time: 20 minutes to create the actual press; several weeks to dry the plants

Materials:

- Several pieces of cardboard
- Newspaper
- Rubberbands
- Heavy books or bricks
- Plant guide

Procedure:

1. For a press that's easy to carry in the field, cut 6x6 inch squares of cardboard. If you plan to press bigger plants, cut bigger pieces of cardboard.
2. Fold some newspaper to fit between the squares of cardboard.
3. Find some good plants to press and layer your plant press as follows: cardboard, newspaper, plants, newspaper, and cardboard. Make sure to put just a single layer of plants in each section, and don't over lap them.
4. Repeat this sequence.
5. When enough plants have been collected or you are out of cardboard squares, put rubberbands around your plant press to keep it closed.
6. Put the plant press under heavy books or bricks.
7. Allow about 2 weeks to dry, and then check the plants. If they are still moist allow more time.
8. When your plants are dry they are ready to be mounted on paper or to be used in art projects.

Extensions:

After the plants are dry, challenge the students to identify their plants using the plant guides. If they can't figure out what plant they have, encourage them to come up with a descriptive name for it. Display the class' plant collection in your room.