

Therapeutic Horticulture Activity Handmade Flower Press

Source: <https://gardentherapy.ca/handmade-flower-press/>

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Overview: Making a flower press that can dry flowers to use in future projects

Precautions:

1. Use of saw (can be done before as preparation and not by the participants)
2. Use of sharp scissors or X-acto knife (can be done as preparation and not by the participants)

Possible Populations:

1. Child to adult
2. Wide range of cognitive functioning
3. Wide range of physical abilities, with possible need for more prep with some aspects of project

Completion Time: 30 - 45 minutes

Materials: (# of participants 1)

1. 2 pieces of wood of equal size
2. 4 bolts
3. 4 washers
4. 4 wing nuts
5. Cardboard (or thin wood)
6. Watercolor paper (or white paper)

Additional Tools:

7. Saw (or have your wood cut to size at your local hardware store)
8. Drill
9. Sandpaper

Pre-Session Prep:

1. Assemble supplies.
2. Create an example of a finished press to show before starting the project.
2. Have wood pre-cut depending on access to a saw and/or appropriateness of participants using a saw.

Step-By-Step Process/Instructions:

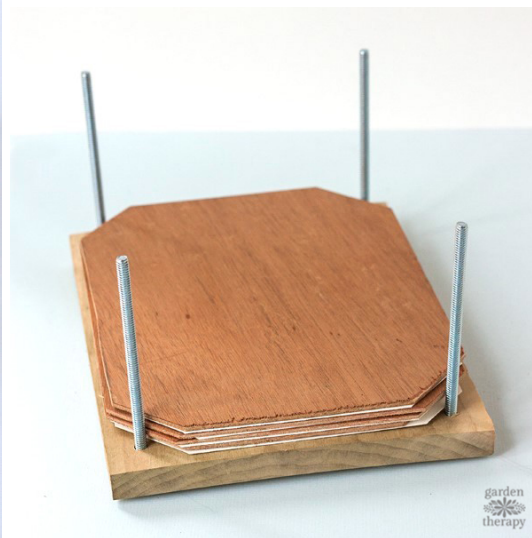
1. Cut your wood to size (you can make your flower press any size you want!). I made mine approx. 8"x 10".
2. Then, with the two pieces of wood stacked together, drill a hole through each corner (all the way through both pieces of wood).
Note: Make sure to choose a drill bit that is the same size as your bolt. I recommend drilling a test hole (using a scrap piece of wood) and making sure the bolt slides through the hole easily.
3. Use sandpaper to smooth off any rough edges.
4. Next, cut your cardboard, or thin wood, to size. Cut your cardboard/wood slightly smaller than your 2 boards. Then cut off each corner so that it will fit inside the bolts.
5. Use a piece of the cut cardboard/wood as a guide for cutting the watercolor paper (or white paper) to size.



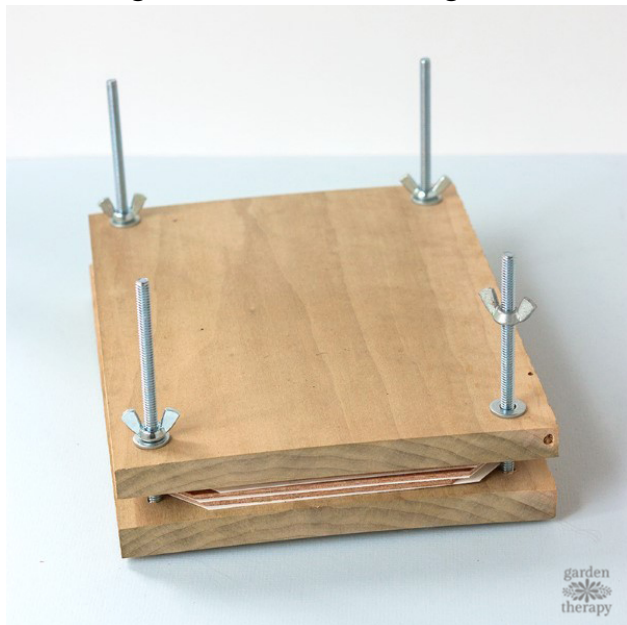
6. To assemble the press, insert a bolt into each corner of the bottom

piece of the press.

7. Layer alternate pieces of cardboard, paper, and flowers or leaves inside the press. The number of layers you use will depend on how many flowers you are pressing.



8. Place the top piece of wood onto the press by threading the bolts through the holes. Add a washer to each bolt, then top with a wing nut, screwing each one down tight, creating even pressure.



9. Allow your flowers to press, undisturbed, for a full 30 days.

This step can occur in same session where press is made or it can be done in a subsequent session

10. After the press is assembled, you can decorate the top if you

choose. This one is decorated with a botanical illustration found in an old book. An x-acto knife was used to carefully cut out the flowers. Once cut out, spray the back with adhesive and place it onto the press. Next, coat it with a few layers of mod podge and give it a final spray of clear acrylic sealer to give it some extra protection.



Tips:

1. Don't recommend using paper towels (instead of white paper or watercolor paper) as the texture of the paper towel will be imprinted into your flowers while pressing.

Flower Pressing Tips:

1. Harvest flowers for pressing on dry days. The best time to collect flowers is mid-morning after the morning dew has dried.
2. Get your picked flowers into the press as soon as possible, before they start to wilt, and keep them out of direct sunlight.
3. Sort your flowers by type and then place them face down into the press. Grouping like flowers together is best because they will dry at the same rate.
4. Make sure the flowers do not touch each other in the press. Otherwise as they dry they will become stuck together forever.

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