

## Now Let's Make a Plant Press



### **Materials:**

pieces of cardboard  
Several pieces of newspaper  
2 super large rubber bands, bungee cords, or a belt

### **Directions:**

1. Select the best leaves of your collection but choose ones that will fit inside your plant press. Dab them with a paper towel to dry them if they are damp.
2. Keep your leaves fresh. If you need to keep them overnight before pressing, place a damp paper towel along with the leaves inside a sealed plastic bag. This will keep them from wilting too much. Get them into the plant press as soon as possible, though.
3. A plant press sandwiches leaves and other plant parts between layers of absorbent material and cardboard. This will help them dry quickly. Newspaper, or paper towels work fine. The inside of your plant press will consist of alternating layers of plants arranged on newspaper or paper towels, and layers of cardboard.
4. Start making your plant press sandwich. The sandwich will alternate like this: cardboard, paper, leaves, paper, and then repeat cardboard, paper, leaves, paper. Be sure to carefully lay each leaf in between 2 sheets of paper. You can lay a few leaves of the same thickness on the same piece of paper, as long as they don't touch. Continue layering until all your cardboard is used up and you have a piece of cardboard on the top and bottom.
5. Once your sandwich is constructed, bind everything together with the two large rubber bands, bungies, or belt. Then to squish leaves flatter, put something heavy on top of the plant press, like a big book, a rock or brick, a bag of flour or sugar, or cans of water. You get the idea. Leave the press in a warm place inside your home.
6. Press the leaves for 10 days and then check on their drying/flattening process. If they are still moist, give them another day or two and check again. You can tell if they are too moist when the leaves stick to the newspaper/paper towel. The process could take 14 or more days.



### Some creative ideas using leaves:

- Use them to decorate bookmarks, notecards, boxes, or other objects. Review **TIPS** beforehand.
- Preserve leaves between 2 layers of waxed paper. Iron wax paper/leaf sandwich with a cool iron. The wax on the paper will melt and “glue” the leaves in place.
- Glue (see **TIPS**) leaves to construction paper and cover with clear, self-sticking plastic paper like *Con-Tact Paper*. This is a sticky job appropriate for an adult or older child.
- Do a rubbing. With the leaf’s veiny underside facing up, cover it with white paper. Hold paper and the leaf steady, keeping leaf in place, and rub the side of a crayon over the leaf, over and over again until you see the leaf margins and veins. Consider using the actual color of the leaf. →→
- Do another rubbing but use aluminum foil and your fingers. →→
- Do a leaf print. Paint the veiny side with tempera or watercolors, and while wet, flip the leaf over so the painted side is faces down. Then gently press the leaf on the paper, making sure to press edges and veins, to get the best results. →→
- Create a leaf collection book by gluing leaves onto papers and binding the papers together.



Giftofcuriosity.com---public domain



Creativejewishmom.com---creative commons

### TIPS:

- Be sure the leaf is completely dry. Otherwise as the leaf dries, it loses its shape, and pulls away from the paper.
- Before doing anything, decide on a layout of your leaves. Then decide how you will stick the leaves to the paper or surface. This is important because once leaves are attached, they are NOT easily removed.
- Use white glue thinned with water or a Mod Podge to attach leaves to heavy paper.
- If a leaf seems breakable, put the glue on the paper and let it sit until it dries a bit and becomes tacky. Then pick up the leaf with damp fingertips and depress it gently onto the glue.

### Other Creative Ideas:

**Write a Joke**  
Why do leaves fall from dogwood trees?  
They're afraid of the bark.  
😄  
Knock, Knock.  
Who's there?  
Autumn

**Write an acrostic poem using autumn words.**  
Falling  
A bundant  
Lovely  
Leaves

**Write a Haiku about fall!**  
Orange, red, and gold (5 syllables)  
Leaves are simply delightful (7 syllables)  
Let us collect some (5 syllables)

The creative ideas section is decorated with several colorful autumn leaves in shades of red, orange, and yellow. A small red-bordered box contains a simple line drawing of a tree with a cloud above it.