

How to Prepare Herbarium Specimens

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A. Pressing Herbarium Specimens

Pressing plant specimens is a relatively simple process. First, you will need a few supplies:

- A plant press (available from a Herbarium supply company)
- Newspaper
- Cardboard cut to fit the plant press, with the fluted edges running the long way on the cardboard (this allows more air flow through the plant press and speeds the drying time)
- Straps to tie the press together with
- A small spade to get the plant out of the ground

When you have found a plant you wish to press, simply use the spade to extract the specimen from the ground. Include simply if possible (if these are too thick, they may be cut lengthwise). Place a piece of cardboard onto the plant press. Then, place the plant in the press between some newspaper on top of this piece of cardboard. Add another piece of cardboard above the specimen. Place the top part of the press onto this, and use your straps to tighten the press as much as possible. And voila - you have just pressed a plant!

If the plant specimen is too large to fit into the press, you may either cut out some of the middle section of the stem or fold the plant into a z-shaped pattern. Press sticky plants in between nonprinted newspaper in case the specimen becomes stuck to the newspaper. Leave the specimen in the press for about a week or until it is dry.

B. Mounting Herbarium Specimens

1. Remove each specimen and locate its collection data.
2. Enter the data into the working database.
3. Prepare an herbarium label for each specimen that does not already have one.
4. Glue on the herbarium label for each sheet.
5. Give each specimen a CS accession number:

a.) Use the number stamp to give the next unused number. If possible, place number in lower left hand corner. If this is not possible, find another visible place for it.

b.) Use the stamp that says "Colorado State University Herbarium" just above the number.

c.) Record in the accession number book the date, what numbers you used, where the specimens came from, and the name of the collector.

6. If it was requested, let the collector know that specimens have been mounted and entered in the herbarium and give them any information they requested (e.g. the accession numbers of the specimens).

7. Place specimens in the appropriate herbarium folder.