

# info

Nova Scotia Museum 1747 Summer Street Halifax, Nova Scotia, B3H 3A6, Phone 426-4810

## Collecting Plants

A good pressed plant will retain much of its colour and lie flat for many years. The secret to this is rapid drying without high temperatures. The plant press holds the plant flat while absorbent layers take up the water.

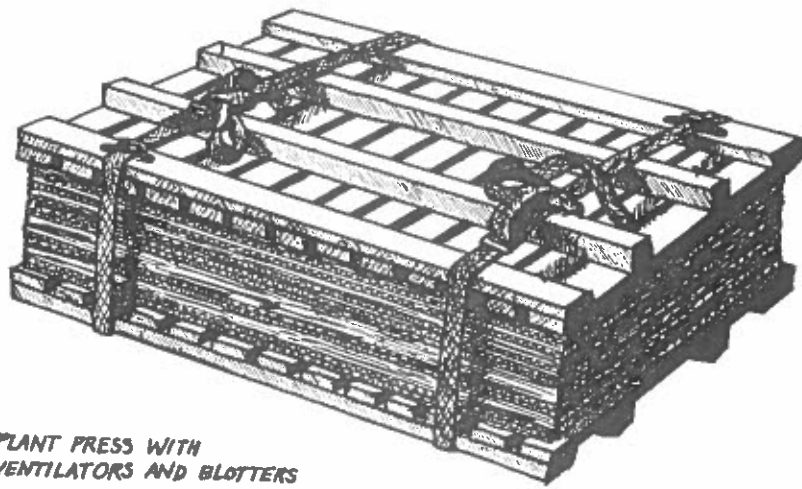
To construct a plant press gather blotters or newspapers, sheets of corrugated cardboard such as from cartons, two rigid frames or sheets of plywood, and straps or rope to bind the press. Since a standard herbarium mounting sheet is 11.5" x 16.5", standard plant press size is 12" x 18" (about 30cm x 50cm). Even if you do not plan to mount your plants on herbarium paper, this is a good sized press. All blotters, ventilators, and frames should be cut to this size.

When collecting a plant for study or reference, dig down to include part of the root if possible. Identification will be easier and your collection more interesting if you collect plants bearing flowers or fruit. Some plants just cannot be positively identified unless flowers or fruit are present. Avoid thick woody stems - a single small branch will do for trees or shrubs. If a specimen is too tall for your press, fold it to fit or find a smaller specimen. Some plants will wilt quickly and should be placed in the press soon after collection; others can be carried home in plastic bags.

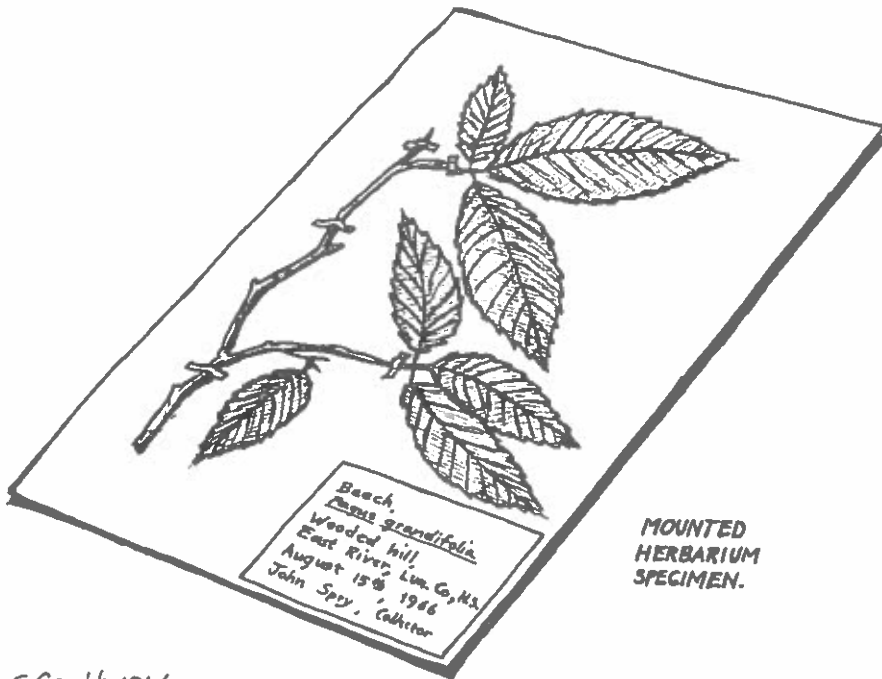
Place the plant between two blotters or in a fold of newspaper several sheets thick. Stack units like this as much as a foot or more ( $\frac{1}{2}$ m) high, with cardboard sheets generously dispersed throughout the pile. The corrugations in the cardboard act as ventilators to allow airflow through the press. Ideally one ventilator should separate each two blotter units. Place a rigid frame or sheet of plywood on top and bottom, then bind the press securely with straps or place heavy weights on top. Change the blotters frequently at first—twice at 12 hour intervals, and then daily. Allow a week for thorough drying if the press is in a warm place where air circulates freely. Succulent plants will take longer. If the plant feels cool to your cheek, it is not yet dry. Plants removed when not completely dry will curl; plants left too long in the press become brittle.

For informal specimens like small flowers or single leaves, a telephone book is nice and absorbent and also portable. You still need weights on top to hold the plants flat, and as pages become damp the specimens should be moved to a dry part of the book.

Use spots of glue or thin strips of cloth tape to attach the dried plants to mounting paper. Heavy paper or light card is suitable. Be sure to record date and place of collection, habitat, and your name, in the lower right-hand corner.



PLANT PRESS WITH  
VENTILATORS AND BLOTTERS



MOUNTED  
HERBARIUM  
SPECIMEN.

F. Scott 1966

Beach,  
Lungs grandifolia  
Wooded hill  
East River, Lun. Co., N.S.  
August 15<sup>th</sup> 1966  
John Spey, Collector

The Museum Science Section maintains a reference herbarium of Nova Scotian plants. Consult our botanist for more information on the collection.

To identify plants, consult these books or contact the Museum Education Section.

- Summer Key to Woody Plants of Nova Scotia
- Trees of Nova Scotia
- Flora of Nova Scotia
- Edible Wild Plants of Nova Scotia

available from the N.S. Government Bookstore, Halifax

Peterson Field Guides to Trees and Wildflowers, from most retail bookstores.