

RAFT IDEAS

Topics: Botany,
Taxonomy, Observations

Materials List

- ✓ 2 pipette holders
- ✓ Paper towels
- ✓ Rubber bands
- ✓ Flowers

This activity can be used to support the teaching of: CO Science Standard 2: Life Science

- Plant structure and function
 - Flowering plant structures and processes
 - Observation and Classification skills
- 21st Century Skills:
- Invention
- Grades: 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, HS

Preserving the Petals

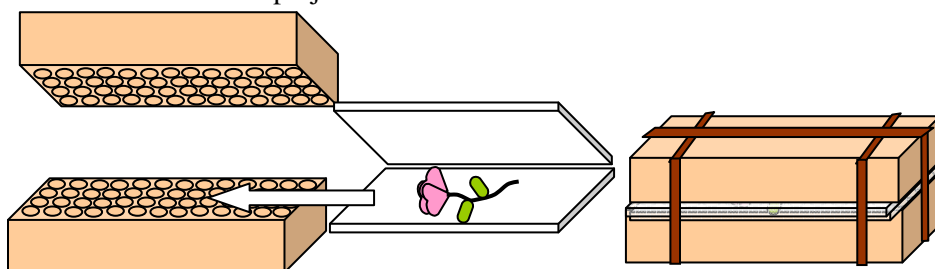
The RAFTy, 2-Minute Plant Press



Press and dry flowers in a couple of minutes with this microwave plant press.

To Do and Notice

1. Gather fresh flowers for pressing. Choose flowers with thin leaves and petals (i.e. – poppies, pansies, tiny daisies).
2. Fold 2 paper towels multiple times so that they are about the same area as the pipette holder surface.
3. Place a flower in between the paper towels and lay this “sandwich” on top of the flat surface of a pipette holder. Invert the second pipette holder and place the flat surface onto the paper towels.
4. Secure the pipette holders together with rubber bands.
5. Microwave on high power for 2 minutes and allow the assembly to cool. If the flower is not completely dry, reassemble the plant press and microwave for an additional 15 seconds. Repeat, as necessary.
6. Use the dried flowers for projects as desired.



The Science Behind the Activity

Flowering plants, Magnoliophyta (or angiosperms), first appeared on Earth at least 140 million years ago. A major group of modern plants, angiosperms produce seeds in specialized organs called flowers, which produce an enclosed ovary or carpel. Scientists have cataloged over 215,000 species of flowering plants, representing over 460 families. The 5 most common families, by number of species, are the daisy, orchid, pea, grass, and coffee families. Flowers are, like most forms of life on Earth, mostly water. In this activity, microwaves heat and evaporate the water in the flowers, drying and preserving the petals.

Taking it Further

- Use the pressed, dried flowers in craft projects such as greeting cards and bookmarks.
- Observe the flowers carefully and classify them according to attributes. Create a nature book of pressed and sorted flower samples.

Web Resources (Visit www.raft.net/more for how-to videos and more ideas!)

For more information on flowers (parts and classifications), visit:

<http://www.floridagardener.com/misc/flowersparts.htm>

<http://www.hcs.ohio-state.edu/hcs300/>