

BLOOMING BOOKMARKS

With longer summer days on the horizon and families staying home, conditions are perfect for children to dive into a good book. And with so many plants bursting with life, it's a great time to venture outside, get crafty, and create a botanic bookmark to pair with a favorite book, while learning about what grows in our neighborhoods!



MATERIALS

Dried flowers, leaves, or herbs
Clear packing tape
Hole punch or scissors
Heavy book(s)
Newspaper (optional)
Ribbon (optional)



STEPS

1) Go outside! Explore your surroundings, and carefully pick a small handful of flowers and/or leaves. 2) Return home and prepare to press-dry your flowers (instructions on next page). 3) After your flowers are pressed and dry, gently remove them and lay them out on a table. 4) Cut a piece of clear tape the length that you want your bookmark to be, leaving an extra inch on each end. 5) Lay your piece of tape sticky side up on a table, and use two small pieces of tape to secure the ends onto the table so that it does not move. 6) Begin laying your flowers and leaves onto the sticky tape, pressing them into place. Repeat this until you have achieved your desired look. 7) Cut another piece of tape the same length as the first piece, and carefully lay it sticky side down directly on top of your creation, pressing down to secure the two pieces of tape together, smoothing out any air bubbles or spaces between plants. 8) Cut off the excess ends that were used to secure your tape to the table. 9) Voila! You have a beautiful Blooming Bookmark! If you have ribbon handy, you can punch/cut a hole at the top end of your bookmark and tie a ribbon through it.

HOW TO PRESS-DRY PLANTS

Tips from the Natural History Museum, London

- Drying flowers quickly can help preserve color. You want a location that's warm enough to get rid of moisture rapidly, without cooking your specimen.
- Depending on what plant you are pressing and the drying conditions, it can take from just a couple of days to a few weeks for your specimen to dry completely.
- Not all plants are easy to press. Bulkier plants are more difficult to press and can get moldy, so aim for plants/flowers that will easily lay flat when pressed (i.e. poppies and ferns).
- Open a book and place a folded piece of newspaper onto the page. Newspaper works well as the immediate covering for your plant specimen because it is fairly absorbent and has anti-fungal properties. Place your plants (as flat as you can) on the page. If you don't have newspaper, simply lay the plants flat onto the pages, though make sure it's a book you don't mind getting a little damp and pigmented.
- Make sure that you keep an even weight across the whole plant specimen that you're pressing. Any part of the plant left in free air rather than in contact with the book will shrivel up.
- Carefully close the book and weight it down- Additional heavy books work well as weights.
- Store this pile in a warm, dry place and check on your flower specimens daily.
- The specimen is ready once it no longer feels damp. The dried plant may be quite brittle, so be careful when moving it.
- Once your flowers are dry, carefully remove them.



OPPORTUNITIES FOR EXPANDED LEARNING

Making Blooming Bookmarks is a great way to encourage reading, as well as explore botany! While on your plant walk, invite children to deeply examine their plant choices. What do they smell like? What do they feel like? What's unique about their leaves or petals or stems, and why do you think they might have evolved that way? What types of animals do you think might be attracted to them, and why? While holding a plant, have children say "I notice.... I wonder.... It reminds me of...." and fill in the blanks. Consider using a plant identifying app or field guide such as iNaturalist to document what you have found, and spend time reading about your different plants' species, adaptations, geography, and more.



Blooming Bookmarks are enjoyable for both children and adults, and make wonderful homemade gifts. Consider making several and placing one in each book you are eager to read in the near future!

ENJOY!



LET'S STAY CONNECTED!

We'd love to see photos of your family doing
At-Home Nature Adventures!

Post your photos and videos on Instagram
and Facebook using our hashtags

#LAArboretumKids

and

#LAArboretumAtHome

for a chance to be featured on our social
media pages. Don't use social media? Just
email us your footage at
brooke.applegate@arboretum.org.



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