

Flower Drying Tips & Tricks

Helpful suggestions to get started:

- Pick well hydrated flowers early in the morning before they get dried out from heat/sun.
- Cut flowers when the bloom first opens – or not quite nearly in full bloom (some will open more when in drying medium)
- Cut flowers of good quality i.e.: no insect holes
- Cut flowers & put into vase of water to keep hydrated until you can get them into drying medium or strung up to dry
- Experiment with all kinds of flowers to see what works well
- Don't just think flowers – some of the seed pods of flowers/shrubs can be equally beautiful
- Strip leaves from stems as they mostly brown when dried in any method

Methods of drying flowers:

- Silica sand – recommend a small granule size
- Cornmeal & Borax – 1 part cornmeal to 1 part borax
- Pressing
- Hang drying
- Drying upright in a vase

Equipment needed to dry flowers:

- Pruner – for cutting
- Pencil & paper – I found it best to label the date of when I put the flowers in the silica or cornmeal/borax mix so I didn't have to guess how long they were drying for.
- Trays to hold silica or cornmeal/borax. **Home use and small amounts of drying – you could use an old 9 x13 cake pan or metal cookie tin with lid. For quantity drying – lids to go over growing trays.
- Small paint brush – sometimes need to brush cornmeal/borax off of petals.
- Long pin (like for a corsage) to separate leaves on like roses when filling with silica gel
- Scissors
- String for hang drying
- Hooks or dowels in a hot—but not humid—garage or attic space
- Small gauge wire as some flower stems need to be reinforced
- Wire cutter
- Boxes to store dry flowers in/Tissue paper to keep separated
- Wreath ring
- Paper cup for scooping up medium to pour over flowers
 - I used a coffee filter with silica sand as I could control the amount of silica going between petals like for roses.

Drying times – this can be a trial and error kind of thing.

- My general rule of thumb is at least one week.
 - Some plants with thicker stems may need 10 to 14 days.
- When it is time to take flowers out of drying medium:
 - Unearth a flower and see if they are dried & ready.
 - Some of the more sturdy flowers/stems can be pulled upright out of medium.
 - More delicate flowers will need to gently be removed and have the medium poured off little by little.

Tips & Tricks

- Think of flowers as each season comes along: Spring bloomers, summer, or fall. I marked on my calendar as a reminder when to start looking for certain flowers so that they were not already past peak this year.
- Experiment with all mediums – that is what was suggested to me when I was learning last year.
- Flowers dried in different mediums may have different shades of color even though it is the same flower.
 - **Borax/Cornmeal:** colored hydrangeas (color richer than silica sand)
 - **Flowers that need wire reinforcement in stems:** straw flowers
 - **Ones that didn't work so well for any method of drying:** lilies, tulips, sunflowers
 - **Just greens:** boxwood, herbs, fall leaves
- Sources on-line for silica sand - Hobby Lobby or Michaels
 - ****I would suggest the fine silica sand versus the larger size granule. You want to be able to get the fine sand in between petals & this is also easier to sift plant material out as needed when using a screen or strainer**.**
- Leaves that can be used for the outside of tussie mussies
 - Magnolia and lambs ear – put them into a zip lock bag and squeeze out most of the air and put into the freezer to use later in the season. This prevents the leaves from becoming brown and dry.
 - Small bergenia leaves, peony leaves, lambs ears, Hazelnut/Magnolia/Tulip Tree leaves (freeze until ready to use)