

Tips for drying flowers.

The **key** thing to ask yourself is:

Where is the moisture/water content going?

This is important for preventing rot.

Traditional pressing.

Arrange flowers on a sheet of paper. Place additional layers of papers above and below the flowers' paper. Put a heavy object on top. The object should provide uniform distribution of weight on the stack. Good examples of weights are books, cases of soda, filing box, etc. Bad examples are a dumbbell, rock, etc.

The first 4-5 days are the most important. You'll need to check on your flowers fairly often. You may need to transfer them to a fresh paper, and you may need to change out the stack of papers above and below. I recycle the papers—keep track of different stacks of moist papers and let them air dry for reuse.

Salt.

I tried to bury flowers/petals in salt for a few days. This works too. You need to check on your flowers/petals making sure the salt hasn't caked on too much. Use a paint brush to dust off the salt if the salt has formed chunks from the moisture. I've also poured a layer of salt on a paper plate, and lay the flowers/petals on top.

Bunches of flowers.

Hanging bunches of flowers upside down is effective for sprays and bunches where the flower heads are very small. The leaves and stems make up most of their bulk. Examples are baby's breath and chamomile.

Organize your bunches. If you bought them from a store, take the time to separate your bunches, trim the stems, and etc. It's a lot tougher to detangle them once they are dried out. At that point, the more you disturb them, the more flower heads that you will lose.

Buds that won't open.

For buds that won't open on their own, you can carefully peel the covering open. Don't wait for the bud to completely dry out, though.

Once the bud is exposed, you can try to tease it (using your fingers) into how you want the bud to look. If you want to press it, use your fingers to smoosh it kinda flat first, and then put it between sheets of papers or towels and under a heavy object (e.g. book, case of water).

The peelings may be saved and used as well. I just put them on a paper plate to air dry.

Roses.

While roses are expensive, they yield consistent results.

Don't splurge for that perfect dozen roses. Get a spray of roses instead.

At Trader Joe's a spray looked pretty much like a dozen, but the spray will cost you a bit less. I'm using the petals as inclusions. In fact, I may have to break the dried petal in smaller pieces. Knowing what your project requires ahead of time will help save you money.

Pluck the petals and lay them out. I used a large cardboard tray. They dry well and dry quickly. At first you wouldn't think it, but so far I've found that they dry the fastest! Don't throw away the flower core. That may be dried and used as well!

Looks like a rose.

If you encounter a flower that looks like a rose, then it is a safe bet that you can try to utilize the same processing techniques for roses.

Rose look-a-likes include (but not limited to): ranunculus, peonies, camellia, dahlia, lisianthus, begonias, double impatiens, double tulips, gardenias, and double dianthus.

I mistook the lovely lisianthus for a rose myself! They were much cheaper than roses. If you're experimenting with techniques, then definitely go for "look-a-likes" to save money until you have your process down.

Hydrangeas.

I love hydrangeas! They're one of my favorites. Don't microwave hydrangeas. The results are very poor.

Instead, use the traditional method. Process hydrangeas by cutting each flower. If there are some small flowers just coming in, you may want to leave them as a two-some, three-some, or more. Place one layer's worth of flowers on a piece of paper, and then stack a lot of papers (and/or kitchen paper towels) on top. Then place a heavy object on top—couple of books, a case of soda, etc.

I checked on them every day. You may need to transfer them to another fresh paper on days 2-4. You may also need to freshen the stacks of papers above and below them. This is to avoid rot. When it seems like they'll stay flat on their own, you can remove them from under the weight, and leave them uncovered to dry.

I really had to pay attention to them but it was worth the effort!! They retain their beautiful color very well. Even the white hydrangeas look fantastic. They dry so beautifully and you have many options for many projects!! Hydrangeas are one of the best flowers to dry.

Oriental lilies.

Oriental lilies are super lovely! They were closed one day, and when I checked on them in the morning, they opened up completely. That was so amazing! I processed them by plucking the petals and saving the stamens and pistil.

I got good results by using multiple methods. First, I started out with traditionally pressing them between layers of paper and putting something heavy on top. Check them often for the first 4-5 days. When it seems like they will lay pretty flat on their own, just leave them out uncovered.

You may need to transfer them to another fresh paper on days 2-4. You may also need to freshen the stacks of papers above and below them. This is to avoid rot. When it seems like they'll stay flat on their own, you can remove them from under the weight, and leave them uncovered to dry.

Carnations and carnations look-a-likes.

For carnations and carnation look-a-likes, there are lots of options.

You can cut the bud with a little stem and hang it to dry, lay it on a paper towel/plate to dry, press it, or use the salting methods. They require a lot of patience as they take a long time to dry.

One of my favorite processing methods is to peel back the base (keeping and drying those parts separately), then cut/pluck out all the petals to dry using traditional pressing.