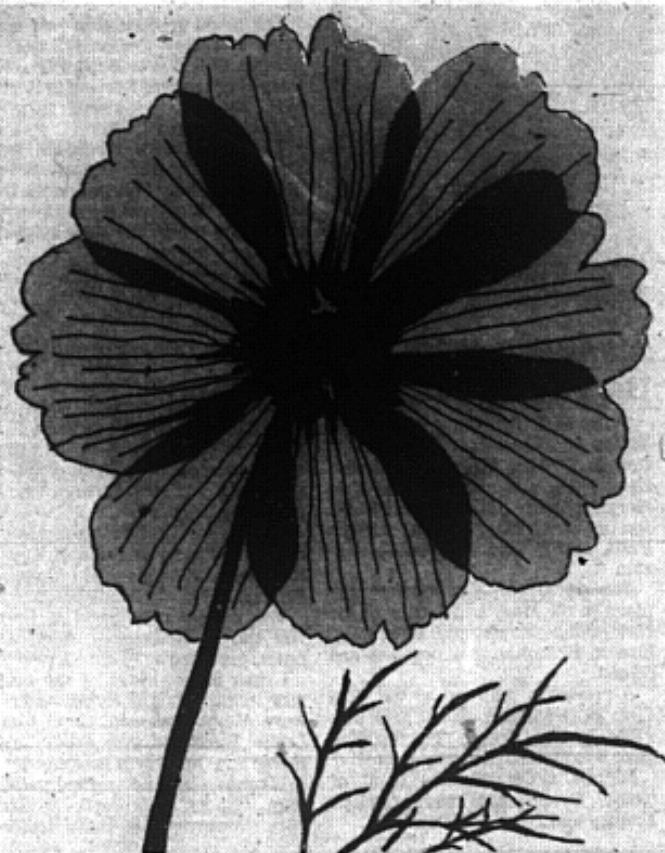


## Home/Garden

## Pressed flowers charming addition to home



Recorder/Pat Allen



This summer we are finally going to finish off the tiny, upstairs bathroom under the eaves. For months the claw-footed bathtub that my daughter dragged up from New York when she remodeled her bathroom has been sitting on the floor — unplumbed. The walls are half-painted and the tools are still piled in the corner.

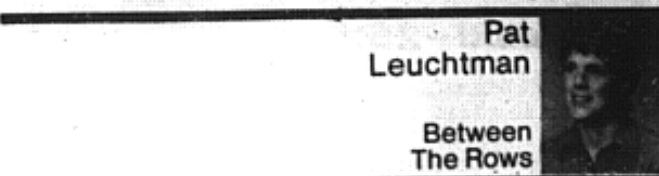
While we've waited for the time to complete the job I've given the finishing touches a lot of thought. I thought about using a pretty wallpaper border, but the walls have too many angles. I thought of framing copies of Redoute's roses, but that seemed too fancy. At last I decided to try and make a dried flower picture to hang — the perfect homemade touch for a little country bathroom.

**T**he list of materials and equipment for drying flowers is short. Paper is important. Depending on how carried away you get with your collecting, you'll need a fair amount of newsprint or other absorbent paper for drying your flowers.

Later you'll need paper for the picture background and maybe a precut mat boards to provide a neat professional touch. A flower press, two pieces of plywood with a long wing-nut in each corner, is nice to have, especially if you're working with flowers like daisies that have hard centers, but it's not necessary.

You can lay your plant materials between two sheets of absorbent paper and then put them into a heavy book. Pile more books, or bricks on top to press the flowers as thoroughly as possible. It's a good idea to put a slip of paper in the book, too, a kind of flower mark instead of a book mark to remind you where you are pressing the buttercups and where the rose petals.

After assembling this minimal equipment it's time to collect and dry a good selection of flowers, leaves, and grasses. Do not pick flowers for pressing immediately after a rain. Wait a day or two and then gather them after the middle of the day when the flowers are fully open and dry.

Pat  
LeuchtmanBetween  
The Rows

It is so little trouble to press plants that if a flower catches your fancy, give it a try. Age does change the colors of many pressed flowers. Be willing to experiment and see what happens.

It may take you a while to pick your flowers so carry a jar of water to act as a vase. You don't want the flowers to wilt and look sad before you get them between sheets of blotting paper and under a weight. Some flowers like clematis have hard, thick centers. The best way to handle these is by cutting the petals off carefully, drying them separately and re-assembling the flower when you create your picture. For design reasons you might also want to dry single petals of other flowers like roses.

For me the hardest part is leaving the plants in a press or under books for at least six weeks. It is so little trouble to press plants that if a flower catches your fancy, give it a try. Age does change the colors of many pressed flowers. Be willing to experiment and see what happens.

Flowers in my garden and meadow (and a few from neighbor's gardens) that press well include buttercups, anemism, white clover, cosmos, delphinium, pink coral bells, hydrangea flowerets, single marigolds and yellow and black-faced pansies.

Leaves and grasses important

Leaves and grasses are also an important part of a pressed flower picture. Almost all ferns dry well and are easy to use. Autumn blackberry and blueberry leaves have a handsome reddish tint. The underside of raspberry leaves are a lovely silver shade. Other silver plants include artemisia and sage.

Finally, it's time to assemble the

board, carefully mark your background so your design will be arranged within those limits. Experiment with placement of your flowers and leaves until you find a pleasing arrangement. Designs that follow a curve or spray are usually very attractive. A simple design will be at least as effective as a complicated, crowded layout.

When you have planned your design, you might want to use a drop or two of white glue to hold the plants in place. After everything is in place and dry, add the mat board, set it in the frame and attach the frame backing. Because the flower colors will change and fade, dried flower pictures should not be hung where they will be in direct sun.

Making pressed flower picture is an enjoyable way of adding a little charm to our homes.

If you are going to use a precut mat

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