

Some Fun For Everyone

Want to specialize that gift for grandma or tell your friend happy birthday? How about making a special gift tag, note card, or bookmark? You will need the rest of the pressed flowers you didn't use for your convention pressed picture contest entry along with the following items:

- * construction paper or card stock
- * pencil
- * ruler
- * pressed leaves or flowers
- * small pointed paint brush
- * white glue
- * crayons, markers, colored pencils, or paint pens
- * clear self-sticking plastic with removable backing (contact paper)

1. Using the pencil and ruler, draw the outline of your bookmark, gift tag, or card on the construction paper or card stock. If you are making gift tags or note cards, make them big enough to fold in half, and decorate only the first half.
2. Lay your pressed flowers and leaves on the tag, in a pattern you like. Move them carefully, for they are delicate and will break. (A dry paint brush is good for moving them around.)
3. When you get the materials where you want them, pick up one large piece at a time, and use the paint brush to put a little white glue on the back. Then put the piece back into position. You only need to glue the large parts, not the stems or tiny leaves.
4. Once everything is glued in place, and it has had time to dry, look at the design and decide if it needs more decoration. If so, use your crayons, markers, etc. to add whatever you would like. Be careful not to disturb the pressed flowers and leaves.
5. Cut out a piece of contact paper larger than the outline of the tag, note card, or bookmark. Peel off the backing and place the plastic over the tag, note card, or bookmark. Starting at one end, smooth down the plastic and press it firmly against your design.
6. Cut out your tag, note card, or bookmark.

Now you have a pretty handmade tag for grandma's gift, a special card for your friend's birthday, or a bookmark for yourself.

Enjoy the summer!

Kim Cromwell
Juniors Chair

Soil - Everything You Ever Wanted to Know (but were afraid to ask)!

Good soil - living soil - is composed of 45% minerals (sand, silt and clay), 25% air, 25% water and only 2-5% decaying organic matter plus many minute living organisms. The top six inches of one acre of living topsoil has 900 pounds of earthworms, 2400 pounds of fungi, 1500 pounds of bacteria, 133 pounds of protozoa and 890 pounds of arthropods and algae.

Night crawlers burrow down to six feet providing filtration and soil aeration. They eat and break down dead plant material and redistribute organic matter in the topsoil. Their excrement known as castings is high in nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium, the exact elements found in fertilizer. Earthworms thrive best with little or no tillage and produce egg capsules, with 2 to 20 baby worms, every 7 to 10 days which hatch in two to three weeks.

Fungi appear as threadlike colonies or one-celled organisms that feed on decomposing organic matter. They also produce plant hormones, antibiotics and consume parasites. Mycorrhizal fungi attach to plant roots and help them take up nutrients.

There are good forms of bacteria in the soil that release nitrogen, sulfur, phosphorus and trace elements as they break down organic matter. Other bacteria break down minerals releasing phosphorus, magnesium, calcium and iron. Still other bacteria release plant hormones, improve soil structure and fight root diseases.

One-celled protozoa are free living microorganisms that crawl or swim in the moisture between soil particles. These predatory organisms eat other microbes, harmful bacteria and release nitrogen for plants. Their movements also break down soil particles.

Many arthropods in the soil can be seen by the naked eye - sowbugs, millipedes, centipedes, slugs, snails. All these eat and shred larger dead plant particles. Nematodes are abundant in soil, attack parasites and speed the rate of decomposition with only a few nematodes harmful to plants.

Algae live in the upper half-inch of soil and produce their own food through photosynthesis. They improve soil structure by binding soil into aggregates with a slimy glue. Some types fix nitrogen in the soil to be used by plants.

By using a high powered microscope with the images projected on a large screen, you will find it amazing to see organisms like nematodes and protozoa whipping around the screen; things read about, but rarely seen.

Peggy Case
Horticulture Chair

Mosquito bites or bees sting, try bananas. Wash first with soap and water, then rub with the inside of a fresh banana peel. Discomfort is said to stop in seconds.

Recycle old CD's by drilling a small hole along the edge. Use fish line to hang in fruit trees to frighten away birds.

