



Putting specimens in the press

Normally specimens of flowering plants, ferns and gymnosperms are pressed and dried between sheets of newspaper (*Advertiser* size). Each specimen is laid out within a folded sheet, with either a field label or a collection number included within each sheet.

Branches should not exceed newspaper size (c. A3 size or 450 x 300 mm) and should be spread out where possible with a minimum of overlap. Tall thin specimens (e.g. grasses or sedges) can be folded in a V or N or M shape to fit this size.

Bulky parts may need splitting or sectioning. This is a good time to open out flowers to show their internal structures.

Placing a piece of corrugated cardboard between each sheet of newspaper is desirable since this helps the specimens to dry.

After placing specimens in the press pressure is applied, usually by means of straps, to flatten the material. As the newspaper and air absorb moisture the plant gradually dries. Replace damp papers and provide good ventilation to avoid the specimens going mouldy. The faster the drying process the better the specimen quality.

Note: Fungi, mosses, liverworts and lichens are best collected in paper bags and dried without being pressed. Marine or freshwater algae require special methods. If you are interested in collecting any of these plant groups, contact the State Herbarium.

State Herbarium of South Australia Identification Service

Plants collected in South Australia from the 'wild' are identified for individuals, community groups, researchers from government departments and tertiary institutions, and consultants. Charges may apply at commercial rates.

Dried specimens may be submitted at the reception desk or forwarded to:
The Manager,
State Herbarium of South Australia
Plant Biodiversity Centre
PO Box 2732, Kent Town, 5071.

Public Reference Herbarium Identifying a plant yourself

The Reference Herbarium is the main public-access area of the State Herbarium in the Plant Biodiversity Centre. It is a facility for those with at least some skills in plant identification. It consists of named specimens of most plants found in the wild in South Australia, arranged in plant families. Services available to enquirers include:

- Books about South Australian plants, produced by the staff and others that will help you identify your plant.
- Microscopes for closer study of specimens. A microscope is frequently necessary to observe features important for identification.
- Interactive computer keys are being developed and will eventually be available to users.

**The Reference Herbarium is open to the public
(9 am - 5 pm, Monday – Friday).**

The State Herbarium of South Australia collection

The State Herbarium of South Australia collection is a rich sample in time and space of the State's plant, algal and fungal biodiversity. It is utilised by botanists as the main source of data and information for documentation of not only the flora of South Australia, but also, in conjunction with a global network of herbaria, that of Australia and the world. Its holdings of 925,000 preserved plant specimens come from all over the world and are valued at over \$43 million.

Botanists at the State Herbarium carry out research, predominantly on the Australian native flora, but also on those plants which have become naturalised through introduction from overseas or across our State borders.

Interstate and overseas botanists and others, including ecologists, agriculturists, horticulturists and forensic scientists, also consult and add to the collections.

Many specimens are added to the collection from collecting trips, both of a general nature and directed at research to improve the classification of plant groups. Others are donated by members of the public with a keen interest in developing their knowledge of the flora. Other important sources include exchange programmes with interstate and overseas herbaria and "voucher specimens" (see overleaf, under *Why collect a specimen*).

Collection and preservation of herbarium specimens



State Herbarium of South Australia Plant Biodiversity Centre

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**Department
for Environment
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