



Preserve Backyard Blooms with Flower Pounding

Try this unusual way of preserving the beauty of your bright backyard blooms. Use a rubber mallet to pound out an imprint of your favorite flowers onto fabric or paper! Decorate T-shirts, aprons, place mats, pillows, wall hangings, Christmas stockings, the list is endless... just use your imagination.

Most any brightly colored flower will transfer. Some favorites include red cockscomb, pink and red geranium, purple petunia, red fuchsia, all colors of aster, chrysanthemum, cosmos, gaillardia, rose moss, and our favorite ... pansy! Black-Eyed Susan and roses work well if you remove the petals from the flower head and use them a few at a time.

Most "fleshy" leaves smash well and most all varieties of ferns turn out beautifully. Colorful fall leaves are also a great choice. Find leaves that are not completely dried out yet. Their red, gold and yellow-green shades produce pretty imprints..

- You need:
- a cutting board or two to three magazines
 - a roll of plastic wrap or waxed paper
 - a rubber mallet
 - fabric or paper (100% cotton or 50-50 cotton/polyester blend)
 - fresh flowers

1. Place the fabric or paper right side up on the cutting board or stack of magazines.
2. Place a flower or leaf on top of the material and cover it with waxed paper or plastic wrap. (Plastic wrap is easier to see through.)
3. Gently tap the entire surface of the flower with your mallet. Pounding it causes the juice to bleed onto the fabric and make a beautiful imprint. (Practice on a scrap to gauge how hard to tap for the best imprint. This also allows you check to see if the plant's true color will transfer.)
4. Remove the plastic and scrape off the plant residue.
5. Repeat this process with additional flowers, leaves and stems to create your own design.
6. After finishing a design, soak the fabric for 10 minutes in a strong saltwater solution (1/2 cup canning salt to 1/2 gallon of cold water). This sets the stain.
7. After 10 minutes, rinse in cold water.
8. Drying by machine or on a clothesline will further set the stain.
9. When your creation needs to be laundered, hand-wash in cold water with mild soap to make sure that your colorful garden memories don't fade away.

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