# Different Flower Drying Techniques



http://www.save-on-crafts.com/dryintecforf.html

**Air Drying your Flowers and Greenery**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| http://us-f4-edit.store.yahoo.com/I/bevfabriccrafts_1995_187792743 | There are several air-drying methods used to accommodate all the different kinds of floral material. The easiest and most effective way to dry most flowers is to tie them in small bundles with twine, raffia or ribbons, and hang them upside down, out of direct sunlight in a warm, well-ventilated place.  Bunches should contain one type of flower. Dry large flowers individually. Strip the leaves as soon as possible after picking. They retain moisture and slow down the drying process.  Use wall hooks, poles or wires placed at least 6" from the ceiling. Stagger the heads to allow plenty of air to circulate. This prevents mildew and rot. Warmth, protection from direct sunlight, a dry atmosphere and plenty of ventilation provide the best results. It may be necessary to re-tie bunches or individual flowers half way through the drying process, because the stems tend to shrink as they dry.  The drying period can range from one week to several weeks depending on the type of material, when and where it was harvested and the humidity of the place where it is drying. The stems of hung flowers tend to dry unnaturally straight and the flowers become very brittle.  Spray dried flowers with hair spray or an aerosol floral sealer to help prevent shedding and shattering.Grasses, moss, lichen, bamboo and leafy branches dry well when laid flat on an absorbent surface like cardboard, newspaper or even wooden floorboards. Whole branches of ferns, bracken and spiky leaves can also be dried this way. |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Arrange material in a single layer on several pieces of newspaper. Don’t overlap the material. The leaves will shrink a little, but they will retain much of their original color and shape on the stalk, (which they will not do if they are hung upside down or dried upright). | http://ep.yimg.com/ca/I/bevfabriccrafts_1664_13002315 |
| **Make a simple shelf of coarse gauge chicken wire** or [floral netting](http://www.save-on-crafts.com/flornet1x4.html) for **air drying** heavy headed plant material such as: globe artichokes, large onion seed heads, protea and large thistles. Each plant has a home in a hole. Provide enough room beneath to allow the stems to hang freely. | http://ep.yimg.com/ca/I/bevfabriccrafts_1664_12986721 |
| Many ornamental grasses dry well when they are set upright in a container, allowing them to bend naturally. Materials that break easily after they are dried such as heather, boxwood and salal leaves can be arranged while they are fresh and left to dry in the arrangement. |  |

**Water Drying**

Water drying is a variation of preserving by air-drying. Strip off most of the leaves, and place the flower stems in 2" of water. Place in a warm place, out of direct sunlight. The water is absorbed and evaporates as the flower dries. Hydrangeas, heathers, hybrid delphiniums, acacia, gypsophila, bells of Ireland, proteas and yarrow dry well this way.

**Oven Drying**

 Compact flowers like marigolds, chrysanthemums, cornflowers and zinnias dry well in a fan-assisted, convection oven. Non-ventilated ovens are not appropriate, because they generate too much moisture.

 The material must be dried at a very low temperature (100 degrees), over many hours. The flowers are slotted through holes in a wire mesh rack leaving room for the stems to dangle below. The time required depends upon the density of the flowers. Check often to make sure the oven doesn’t get too hot.

**Drying in** [**Sand**](http://www.save-on-crafts.com/dryintecforf.html)



It takes flowers and foliage about three weeks to dry in sand. To prepare tall, spiky flowers like delphinium, pour an inch of sand in a large flat container. Scoop out a place for each flower and build up the sand around it. Pour the sand in a circular motion around the flower. To prepare round, compact flowers like zinnias, wire the stems, and place them upside down in an inch of sand. Build up the sand around the edges of the flower. Don’t pour sand on top, it just supports the natural form of the flower until it is dry. Use children’s play sand. It is washed and screened, and it doesn’t contain any chemicals or additives.

The sandboxes can be placed in the sun, the attic or any other warm, dry location. Flowers can be left indefinitely in sand, because sand is inert and won’t affect the flower. Silica gel draws moisture out of flowers so you have to time them more carefully. To speed up the drying, place the sandbox in the oven at 100 degrees or let the natural heat from the pilot light extract the moisture.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | **Drying With Desiccants**  Although drying with desiccants, such as [silica gel](http://www.save-on-crafts.com/driedflowpre.html) or a mixture of borax and cornmeal, can be the least predictable way to preserve flowers and foliage, the results can be dazzling and lifelike. The desiccant must be completely dry before you begin. Warm it in the oven at 100 degrees for a half-hour before using. |
| http://ep.yimg.com/ca/I/bevfabriccrafts_1636_3716154 | Most compact flowers dry best with their heads facing up when using desiccants. Wire the stems before drying; Bend the wires out of the way as necessary. Lay delphiniums and other spiky flowers lengthwise onto the desiccant. Dry one type of flower at a time, because some flowers take longer to dry than others.   Layer an inch or so of silica gel or an equal mixture of borax and cornmeal on the bottom of a large flat container. Plastic storage boxes with tightly fitting lids are perfect. Build up the desiccant around the edges of the flowers. Sprinkle a light layer on top of each flower. Separate the petals carefully with a toothpick as you sprinkle. Build up the layer on top until it is about one inch deep. |

Cover the container with a tight fitting lid and store in a dry place. Check in four to five days to see if the flowers are papery and dry. If not, re-cover with desiccant, close the lid and check again in a couple of days. If they are left too long, they become brittle and dark. So, check often. When dry, slowly pour the desiccant through your hands, catching each flower and testing to make sure it is papery and dry. Use a soft brush to remove any desiccant that tends to cling.

**Microwave Drying**

Herbs can be successfully dried in the microwave and stored for future use. Cut perfect leaves and remove any foreign material. Don’t pre-wash. Place on a paper towel, don’t overlap, and heat on medium high for one minute. If still moist, change the paper towel, and repeat the process until herbs are dry. Allow the herbs to ‘rest’ for ten minutes in-between cooking. Wait until the herbs become room temperature before storing in a tightly covered container.

See more dry flower technique, instruction and projects below.  
  
Continue in Floral Design Instruction with [Dried Flower Arranging](http://www.save-on-crafts.com/driedflowarb.html)