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## PRESERVING FLOWERS



I am still enjoying my flowers thanks to our lovely, warm fall weather, but I know winter is right around the corner. So, I'm trying my hand at preserving some of my blooms.

There are several ways to preserve flowers, including hanging them to dry, drying them with a product like Silica Gel, and pressing them.

They can be displayed as bouquets, used in wreaths, framed, and glued to things like baskets. I found several books at the library with hundreds of ideas for using dried flowers, leaves, seeds, pods, and grasses.

### Preserving Methods

I've successfully dried lavender, gomphrena and celosia by hanging small bouquets upside down in a dry, dark room. These flowers hold their shape and color well and are wonderful in wreaths.

Cut small bouquets of 8-10 flowers, tie them together, and hang them upside down for about two weeks to ensure they are dry. This year I am also trying Silica Gel for the first time. Silica Gel can be purchased at craft stores and online. This technique is best for drying single flowers.

Spread a thin layer of Silica Gel in an airtight container, carefully lay out your flowers, and then begin gently sprinkling the particles within the petals until the flower is completely covered. Secure the lid and let the flowers sit for several weeks.

Silica sand can also be used and involves covering your flowers and microwaving them for 30 seconds at a time, with a separate cup of water also in the microwave, until the flowers seem dry. Let them sit for 24 more hours before removing from the sand.

I just finished my first batch of marigolds, small sunflowers, and daisies and found Silica Gel is excellent for maintaining a flower's color. The marigolds are so colorful that they





look fresh! My second batch using this method includes zinnias and celosia. I'm hoping to be able to maintain more of the color of the pink crested celosia.

It's been many years since I tried pressing flowers. This method usually involves pressing flowers between pieces of wax paper and heavy books. This is a method I've used in the past to preserve fall leaves.

The use of resin to preserve and display dried flowers is another option. The resin is usually poured into a mold or frame, dried flowers are added (usually pressed flowers), and then more resin is poured on top to completely enclose the flower. This method will preserve flowers longer.

### **Maintaining Dried Flowers**

Dried flowers exposed to air can last up to two years if not exposed to sun, rain, or wind. Obviously, those preserved in resin will last for many years.

I'm having fun experimenting with dried flowers and I love that I can enjoy the flowers I've grown a little longer after the growing season ends.