

KHD Specimen Drying Protocol

Part A: New Specimens

Specimens brought back from the field must be transferred from field presses into wooden presses and then dries in the plant dryer.

Step 1. Check to make sure the specimens do not have insects crawling on or out of them. If this is the case please find Melissa, Chrissy or Rick right away. No need to panic, we just need to decide how to proceed.

Step 2. Verify that each specimen has the collector's initials and collector number written on the newspaper. If this is not the case, the collector must do so as soon as possible, before any other steps are taken.

Step 3. Check to make sure the specimens are pressed between dry cardboard and/or blotter paper. Replace the cardboard and blotter paper if it is not totally dry. Then transfer the specimens into a wooden press.

Step 4. Add a sticky note to the press with YOUR NAME and TODAY'S DATE. The date is the first day that you are putting specimens into the dryer. Make sure the note is slipped under the press slats so it doesn't fall off.

Step 5. Place press(es) in the dryer. Orient presses on their side, like the press circled in Figure 1. **Make sure the dryer is turned on.**

Step 6. Email Melissa (melissa.islam@botanicgarden.org) the number of plant presses you placed in the dryer and include any additional information you think might be important, like super sticky plants or lots of poison ivy.

Next steps depend on the month

May: You will need to take care of your own specimens or find someone who will help you. Check on your specimens every day and replace cardboard until specimens are dry, see Checking Specimens in Plant Dryer | Protocol on the next page.

June – September: The herbarium team will be checking all plant presses and replacing cardboard or moving dried specimens into genus folders and placing them into the appropriate cabinet and cubby. This makes it very important to have your plant presses labeled with a sticky note. If during this period of time, you can't find your specimens, then please ask Melissa or Chrissy.



Figure 1. Plant Dryer with presses.
From storemorestore.com

Part B: Checking Specimens in Plant Dryer

Specimens in the dryer need to be checked every 24 hours, and the cardboard changed until they are dry. All plant presses should be labeled with a sticky note that includes the collector's name and the date the press was first placed in the dryer.

Some tips:

- Be careful opening up the newspaper. Plants or plant parts may be stuck to the pages or may be small and light and easily fall out and float away.
- Always remove blotters after 24 hours.
- Cinch down straps tightly.
- Make sure the sticky note is still on the plant press before its returned to the dryer.

Days 1-3

Check several specimens and if they are damp, replace all the cardboard in the press with fresh, dry cardboard. Place damp cardboard and blotters in the dryer.

After Day 3

If most specimens are dry, remove dry specimens from the press and place in a used genus folder. Place genus folder in the appropriate cabinet and cubby*, see Cabinet Assignments below. Look at each specimen individually before placing in the genus folder, a few could have fruits or other parts that are still damp and require additional drying time. Return those still damp specimens to the press with fresh cardboard.

If most specimens are damp, then replace cardboard and continue as before. Continue checking until all specimens are removed.

*Place specimens in the cabinet and cubby assigned to you or that collector. Ssee Cabinet Assignments below. In the cubby, above your specimens should be a piece of cardboard labeled with a sticky note or paper with your name and the year – e.g. Melissa Islam 2018. The label should hang over the folder so its easy to spot. If you use a sticky note, please tape it to the cardboard.

If you are confused or have any problems, please contact Melissa. If she's not in, send her an email and place the genus folder in the plant dryer with a sticky note.

Cabinet Assignments

Staff Cabinet (1 of 5) – Chrissy, Loraine, and Melissa

Staff Cabinet (2 of 5) – Jan

Staff Cabinet (4 of 5) – Everyone not listed above. If you are in this category and are planning to collect 100s of specimens in 2018, please let Melissa know so cubby space can be provided.
