

Archiving Fruits

KAMARULIZWAN KAMARUDDIN



A Herbarium is a collection of dried plants or specimens of plants, that are systematically arranged, usually either geographically or alphabetically, for reference. Plant specimens are pressed in a plant press, which consists of a wooden frame, corrugated cardboard ventilators, blotter paper and folded paper, typically a newspaper. The objective of pressing plants is to extract moisture in the shortest period of time, preserving the morphological integrity of the plant and to yield material that can be readily mounted on herbarium paper for long-term storage.



Plants should be carefully arranged as they are placed in the press to maximize preservation of diagnostic features. Leaves, flowers, and fruits should be spread out so that they do not overlap and can be observed from different perspectives. Specimens are dried in an oven at 60°C temperature for three days or up to 1 week. Once the material is pressed and thoroughly dried, it is mounted on herbarium sheets of standard size.

The identification of unknown plant material is accomplished with the use of dichotomous keys; published plant descriptions,

illustrations and photographs; and comparisons with properly identified herbarium specimens. Samples that have been recognized and identified are properly stored in a dry, pest-free environment in the 20-23°C temperature or lower and relative humidity at 40-60%. For wet or spirit collections of the very fleshy or delicate structures, including fruits, small algae and orchid flowers, these are best preserved in an air-tight glass or plastic jar with a liquid preservative rather than by drying.