



Make Your Own Herbarium

KS2 Science Resource



Museum
Gallery
Archive

Contents

4

Who was Sir John St Aubyn and what is a herbarium?

6

Make your own

8

Time to start collecting

10

Dry your plants

12

Stick 'em up!

13

Protect your specimen

14

Blank labels

Who was Sir John St Aubyn and what is a herbarium?

Sir John St. Aubyn was born at Golden Square, London on 17 May 1758.



He served as High Sheriff of Cornwall (at the age of 23), and went on to become a Fellow of the Royal Society, a Fellow of the Linnean Society, a member of Parliament, Fellow of the Society of Antiquarians, Fellow of the Geological Society of London, Fellow of the Society of Arts and Provincial Grandmaster of the Freemasons.

Clearly he was a very busy man!

Sir John was captivated by science and the arts and was a keen collector. His particular interest was for collecting minerals, but he also had an interest in botany, and he created his own herbarium.



The Sir John St. Aubyn collection at The Box, Plymouth is an important 18th century collection. It consists of a substantial mineral and herbarium collection.

A herbarium is a collection of carefully-dried plants. St Aubyn's herbarium gives us a fascinating glimpse into the botanical world in the 18th century. It contains not only plants that have been collected locally, but also specimens which have been collected from early plant nurseries and important gardens.

Make Your Own

Why not make your own herbarium and preserve some plant specimens?

To start your own herbarium you will need:

1. A pile of old newspapers
2. Four sheets of heavy cardboard
3. Two or three old bricks or other heavy weights
4. Small pieces of card, and pencils
5. Scissors for cutting samples of leaves
6. A4 sheets of thin white cardboard, or heavy paper
7. PVA glue
8. A folder or lever arch file
9. A guide book to local plants (or you could use the internet)

Before you collect anything, it's very important to know about what you can and cannot collect. In Britain all wild plants, including wildflowers, mosses, algae, fungi etc, are protected under the **Wildlife and Countryside Act of 1981**. Before you pick anything you must get permission, so it is probably a good idea to stick to plants growing in your own or school garden, or better still, buy some seeds and grow your own plants and flowers to use.

A guide to local plants will also be useful in identifying plants that might be **harmful or poisonous** to humans. Many plants and flowers found locally can be dangerous and may lead to severe illness or death. Please take care when selecting your plants.



Selene pendula
Clowson's Garden,
July 30 20th
1001

Time to start collecting

Watch your garden plants and trees carefully to see when their leaves and flowers become fully grown.

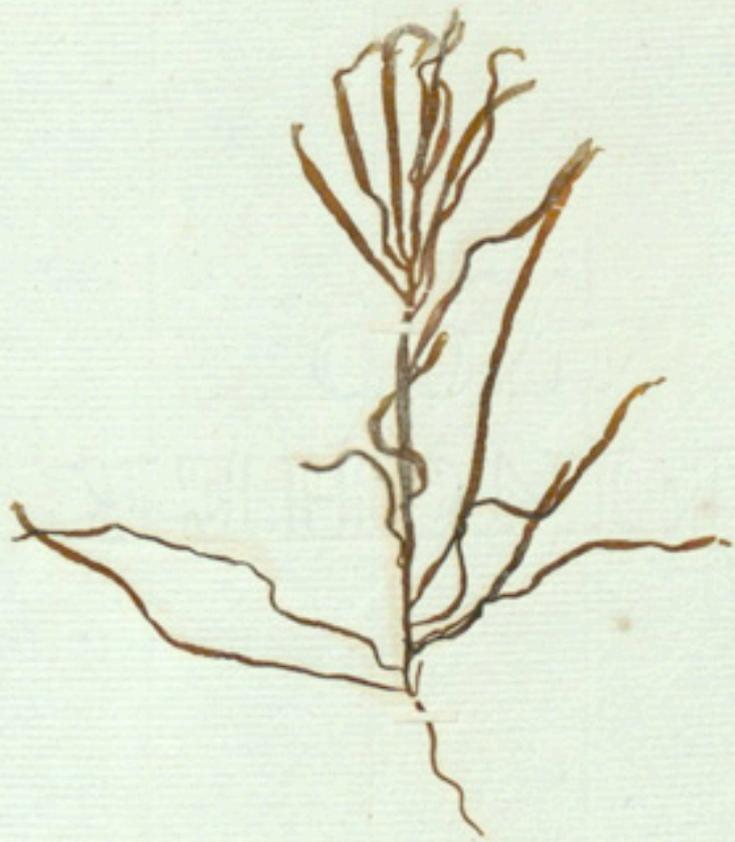
Try one specimen first.

See if you can identify which species you are selecting with a book such as the **RHS Encyclopedia of Plants and Flowers** or **Wild Flowers** by Sarah Raven, which you might be able to find in your local library.

When the flowers or leaves look ready it's time to collect a sample. Be sure to ask permission and check whether the plant is not harmful before cutting off any stems. If you use a scissors, get some help from an adult.

Make sure you can fit the sample on your A4 page!

For each sample, write down the date, the kind of plant, the location and your name on a piece of card or paper and keep it with the sample. Again, make sure this label fits on your page along with your specimen.



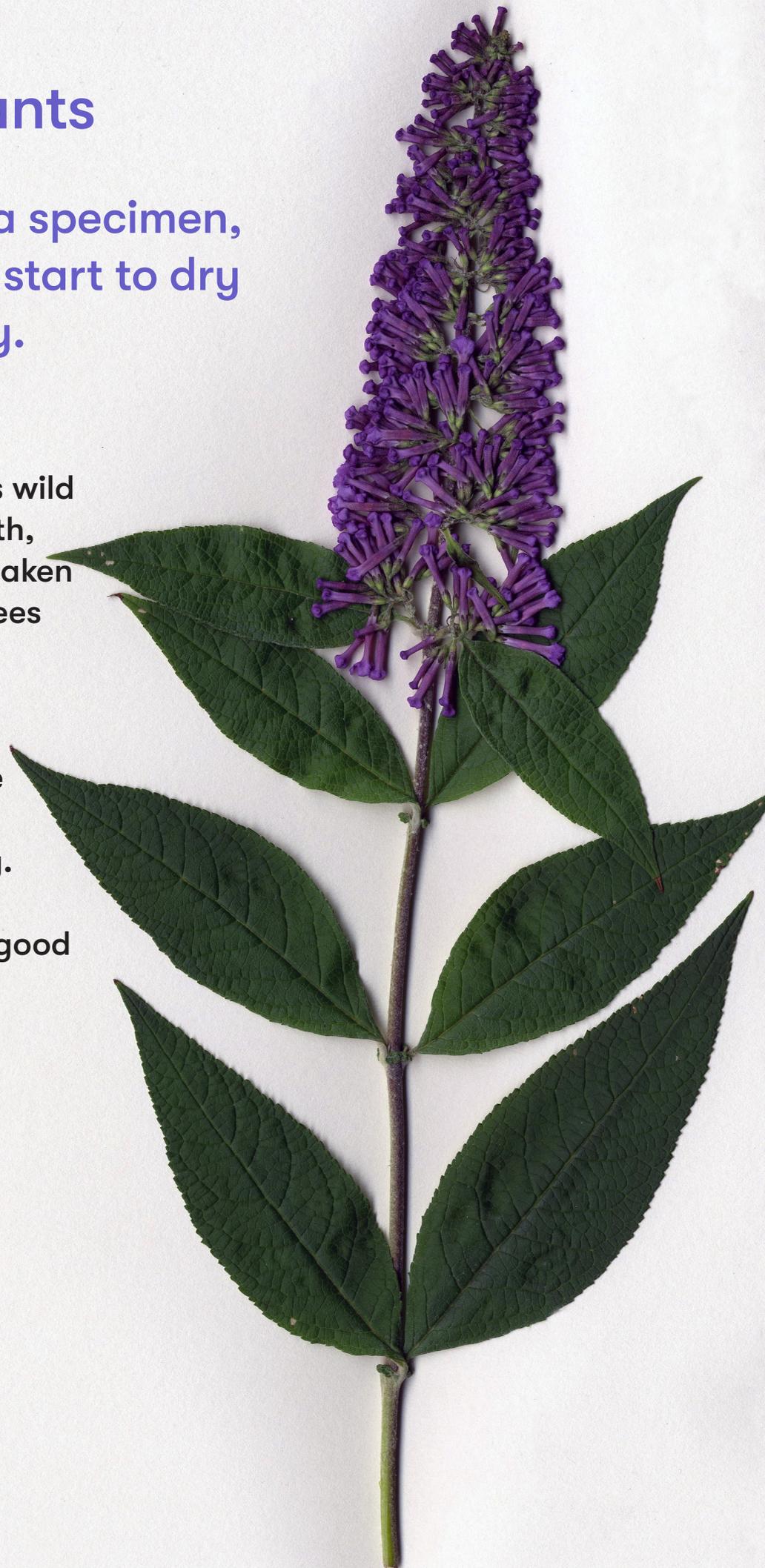
Dry your plants

Once you have a specimen, you will need to start to dry it out thoroughly.

Buddleia davidii grows wild everywhere in Plymouth, but we have still only taken a small piece as the bees and butterflies love it.

Find a safe place on a shelf or bench to leave your specimen for a couple of weeks to dry.

The area should have good air circulation to carry away moisture.



Place two layers of heavy cardboard on the shelf or bench, and then spread out some old newspapers on the cardboard.

Put your specimen between about 10 layers of newspaper, and remember to keep your information label with it.

Add two more layers of cardboard, and put your bricks or weights on top of that.

After a week, have a look at your specimen. If it feels very dry then you're ready to mount the leaves on the white cardboard. If not, leave it for another week.



Stick 'em up!

Once your specimen is very dry, you are ready to stick it to your A4 card or paper.

Use PVA glue to attach the specimen to the sheet, carefully choosing how to position it so you can add your information label. Usually these are placed in the bottom-right corner of the sheet, but you can do it however you like.

Ours is placed bottom-left in this document.

Make sure you really cover the back of your specimen with the glue; you don't want it to fall off!



Herbarium of The Box, Plymouth

Name:

Buddleia (Buddleja davidii)

Location:

The Secret Box Garden, Tavistock Place

Date Collected:

Friday 16th May 2020

Description:

Dark green leaves, bright purple flowers. Many flower heads per plant. Growing from top of stone wall.

Protect your specimen

St Aubyn's amazing herbarium sheets were made over 200 years ago.

Why not try making more sheets using other plants from your garden or local area?

Keep you specimens in a file folder and store in a place where they will stay cool, dry and flat.

Remember that they are still plants and so if they get moist they can rot, or if they are found by insects or mice they might get eaten!



Herbarium of The Box, Plymouth

Name:

Buddleia (Buddleja davidii)

Location:

The Secret Box Garden, Tavistock Place

Date Collected:

Friday 16th May 2020

Description:

Dark green leaves, bright purple flowers. Many flower heads per plant. Growing from top of stone wall.

Blank labels

Print and cut-up these labels to use for your own herbarium, or make your own!

Herbarium of
Name:

Location:

Date Collected:

Description:

**Herbarium of
Name:**

Location:

Date Collected:

Description:

Visit our website for the latest offers, news and projects for schools, and to book your experience with us;
theboxplymouth.com



Supported using public funding by
ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND

LOTTERY FUNDED