

COMPLETE FREE PRACTICAL GUIDE

Three measured, original botanical greeting-card designs

Create three original folded greeting-card designs with carefully dried, responsibly sourced flowers and a true-size cutting plan.

STEADLEAF PRESS | MAKE / M12 Botanical & Natural-Material Crafts | STP-MAKE-F013

A card that keeps the shape of a flower

A pressed flower can turn a simple handwritten note into a small portrait of a season. The most useful starting point is not an elaborate arrangement. It is one fully dry flower or leaf, a measured piece of card and a deliberate place for the recipient's message. This guide teaches a low-equipment book-pressing method and then shows how to arrange three distinct cards: a quiet corner, a slender stem and a modest border.

What you will make: three original, folded decorative paper cards. Each card is planned as a **120 x 170 mm folded card** cut from a **240 x 170 mm flat rectangle**. A separate printable cutting-and-layout sheet supplies the full-size outer edge, center fold, a 50 mm print-calibration bar and placement windows. The card size is an editorial design choice rather than a commercial envelope standard. Check envelope dimensions if you intend to mail one. No physical pressing, mailing or durability result is claimed.

Important boundary: use these as ordinary decorative cards for adults. Do not include unidentified, irritating or poisonous plants; do not place loose botanicals where toddlers or pets can reach them. A pressed flower is not a preserved food, medicine, fragrance product or guaranteed archival keepsake.

1. Decide where the flowers can come from

Use flowers from your own garden, a florist's permitted offcuts or a plant whose owner has clearly agreed to provide a few blooms. Do not pick flowers from protected habitats, public displays, a neighbor's garden or a wild site where collection is restricted. Follow the site owner's or local authority's rules. The responsible-choice principle matters more than finding a photogenic specimen.

Choose clean, dry, relatively flat flowers or leaves with a thin profile. Small petals, pansies and individual leaves make more practical starting material than thick, fleshy flower heads. The Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) identifies pansies, primroses and small leaves among useful pressing choices and recommends selecting on a dry day rather than after rain or morning dew [1, 2]. Do not use plants treated recently with products you cannot identify, plants known to irritate you, or unknown plants that could be harmful on skin contact. Wear suitable gloves if your chosen plant or your skin requires them and wash hands afterward.

Before picking, set the paper card in front of you. Ask whether the specimen will fit comfortably into the **90 x 138 mm placement area** on the 120 x 170 mm front panel, leaving at least **15 mm** at either side and **16 mm** at the top and bottom. That placement area is a design boundary, not a scientific pressing requirement; a larger flower may need a different arrangement rather than being forced to fit.

2. Gather tools without turning this into a shopping project

For the book press, gather two or more absorbent paper sheets per arrangement, a heavy book that you can protect from moisture, and optional additional books for gentle even weight. Use clean scrap or blotting paper. Keep plants from touching valuable pages directly. Have a dry, flat place where the press can remain undisturbed and can be checked. RHS describes absorbent paper and weighted books as a practical pressing approach; its school guide gives **two to four weeks** as a typical period for book pressing [1]. Timing varies with thickness and local humidity.

For card making, prepare a sheet of plain sturdy card at least **240 x 170 mm** for each card, a ruler, pencil, eraser, clean scissors or a paper trimmer suitable for your skill, a bone folder or the back of a smooth spoon, and an adhesive labeled appropriate for dry botanical material and your chosen paper. A clean dry brush or tweezers may help move fragile pieces. Use a light paper sheet as a temporary protective overlay when arranging the finished card.

A4 and US Letter paper can both carry the **240 x 170 mm** cutting template in *landscape* orientation with useful printer margins. Cardstock compatibility is printer-specific; if your printer cannot accept heavy card, print the guide onto ordinary paper at 100%, confirm the ruler bar, and transfer the measurements to cardstock with a ruler. Never assume a printer's "fit to page" output is true size.

3. Press for dryness, not for a deadline

Prepare a layer. On a clean dry table, open the protective book near its middle. Place two sheets of absorbent paper between the pages and arrange the flowers apart from one another. Spread petals so they will not fold over their neighbors. Cover with another absorbent sheet and close the book without sliding the stack. If the specimen is thicker than the press can hold evenly, choose a thinner one. Do not crush a swollen, damp plant into the book just to preserve a date.

Add weight and wait. Place another book on top if necessary and leave it in a dry, protected room. RHS recommends inspecting press material after about 24 hours and replacing damp layers as necessary in its herbarium guidance [3]. Check carefully without tearing the petal shapes. Return the sheets flat and give the flowers enough time to dry: **two to four weeks is a planning window, not an expiry date** [1]. Very thin material may be ready sooner; thick material may take longer. You are looking for dry, papery plant material, not a particular calendar day.

Stop if there is a problem. Damp paper, condensation, musty odor or visible mold means the specimen is unsuitable for a greeting card. Discard affected material safely, clean the work area and restart with cleaner, drier flowers; do not enclose mold in adhesive or a card. The RHS notes that dried plant displays can develop mold in damp settings [2]. Keep the press away from kitchens, food and surfaces used for preparing meals.

Store the results. Once completely dry, move intact specimens with a dry brush or tweezers into a labeled paper folder, flat and protected from humidity and direct sunlight. A specimen may fade or crack over time. A paper folder is not an airtight or archival conservation system.

4. Cut and fold a card to a measured plan

Place the downloadable **true-size card template** on a table and identify its 50 mm check bar. Print using **Actual size / 100%**, select *landscape*, and disable automatic scaling. Measure the bar with a physical ruler. If it does not measure 50 mm, do not trace the printout; mark the listed dimensions onto cardstock directly.

Each card begins as one **240 x 170 mm** rectangle. Measure its four edges and draw the cut perimeter. Cut on the continuous outline only. Do not cut the dashed vertical fold line at the **120 mm midpoint**. Gently score that midpoint with a blunt folding tool against a ruler if appropriate for the card stock, without cutting through the paper. Fold with care, aligning the two short ends; unfold to decorate the outside front panel and protect the inside from adhesive.

The resulting flat front panel is **120 x 170 mm**, and the full unfolded card is **240 x 170 mm**. Because the paper has thickness, the closed card may be fractionally smaller and may not close perfectly without a crease; these are design measurements, not a promise of precise final dimensions. The cutting sheet provides the same dimensions for A4 and Letter, with different page margins.

5. Compose three cards that are genuinely different

Card A — Quiet Corner. Choose a small fully dry flower and one thin leaf. On the outside front panel, keep the bloom around the lower-right quadrant and leave most of the top-left blank for a name or short greeting. Use the template's corner guide to plan the placement. Keep flowers away from the central fold so the card can close without bending the specimen. A short handwritten note inside is enough; avoid printing decorative words over a flower.

Card B — One Stem. A slender dried stalk, with a leaf or two, becomes the focus. Align it in a vertical strip toward the left half of the front panel; do not let it cross the fold. Leave a clear writable area to the right. If the plant is too brittle to move intact, use individual leaves as a vertical rhythm rather than taping a broken stalk and pretending it is whole.

Card C — Three-Point Border. Arrange three small flat pieces at the top-left, upper-right and lower-left of the front panel, keeping a large empty central area for a short message. Use only plants that lie flat; if each piece is bulky, reduce the number. The finished composition should not require thick adhesive piles or pressure against a sealed envelope.

Do a dry layout without glue. Move each piece until the card opens and closes without catching. Photograph the temporary arrangement if it helps you remember. These three designs are original composition prompts, not reproductions of an existing pressed-flower pattern.

6. Fix the specimens without staining the card

Before using the adhesive on the final card, read its exact label for paper compatibility, ventilation, skin precautions and drying time. Select an adhesive appropriate for the particular plant and card. Test a small amount on an inconspicuous scrap of the same card, because some glues cause translucent stains, curling or brittle residue. Avoid aerosol sprays, industrial solvents or high-temperature tools for this beginner version.

Open the card flat and shield its inside. With a small brush or the manufacturer's applicator, place a minimal amount of adhesive on the back of the *stem or thickest suitable contact points*, not across every fragile petal. Gently lower each completely dry specimen into the arrangement. Follow the product instructions for pressure and drying. Remove extra adhesive with care and let the card dry open on a clean surface until it is no longer tacky. Avoid pressing the card under valuable books while glue remains wet. Do not close it while damp.

A plant can detach even when the card initially looks neat. If it does, use a more suitable adhesive and less handling rather than saturating the whole surface. Avoid claiming the result is permanent, washable or safe to contact food.

7. Add your message and think about handing it to someone

Write on the inside with a pen compatible with the card; allow ink to dry fully. A useful short note has a clear recipient, one specific observation and a closing. For example, "You always notice the first flowers on the walk. I thought of you when I saw these colors." Do not invent a story of where the flower was collected if you do not know.

If the card will travel, check the envelope's real interior dimensions and whether the pressed material catches or sheds. A flat, protective cover sheet can reduce incidental rubbing if suitable for your design, but no package is guaranteed to prevent breakage. If mailing across borders, check plant-material restrictions with the postal or destination authority before sending; dried plant matter may be restricted. For gifts to someone with allergies, consider a printed illustration rather than actual pressed flowers.

8. Troubleshoot the defects that matter

Petals turn brown or spotted. Material may have been damp, damaged or naturally prone to changing color. Do not glue a visibly moldy specimen onto a card. Use new dry material; color retention is not guaranteed.

The card curls. Too much liquid glue or incompatible paper may have caused distortion. Reduce adhesive, use sturdier appropriate cardstock and let it dry open. Do not steam or iron the dried plant back into place.

The flower sits across the fold. Replan the composition before gluing. A brittle stem bridging a fold may crack whenever the card opens. Keep the full specimen within the front panel.

The printed outline has the wrong size. Recheck the 50 mm calibration bar and scaling options. Trace by ruler from the numeric measurements instead of relying on an incorrectly sized print.

The arrangement looks crowded. Remove pieces before gluing. Negative space makes the plant's delicate shape visible and leaves room for a real message.

The card has a musty smell. Do not gift it. Check for damp or mold and discard contaminated botanical material. Store future cards in a drier place.

9. Printable completion and source record

The companion sheet includes a 240 x 170 mm cutting outline, three small layout windows and a 50 mm calibration bar. Record the specimen's known plant name (or mark *unknown and do not use*), where you obtained permission to take it, date pressed, paper changes, final dry check, adhesive used, envelope fit and anything you would simplify next time. This is your **reader's own work record**, not a claim that the publisher physically made a finished card.

A practical stopping point is three thoughtfully arranged cards, even if one design uses only a leaf. There is no requirement to fill every inch of paper. If the real specimens are too moist or uncertain to use, a drawn flower motif is a safer creative alternative.

Sources and original-design boundary

[1] Royal Horticultural Society (RHS), *Art focus: Pressed flowers and leaves*. Book pressing, absorbent paper, specimen choice and typical 2–4-week drying window. Open cited source

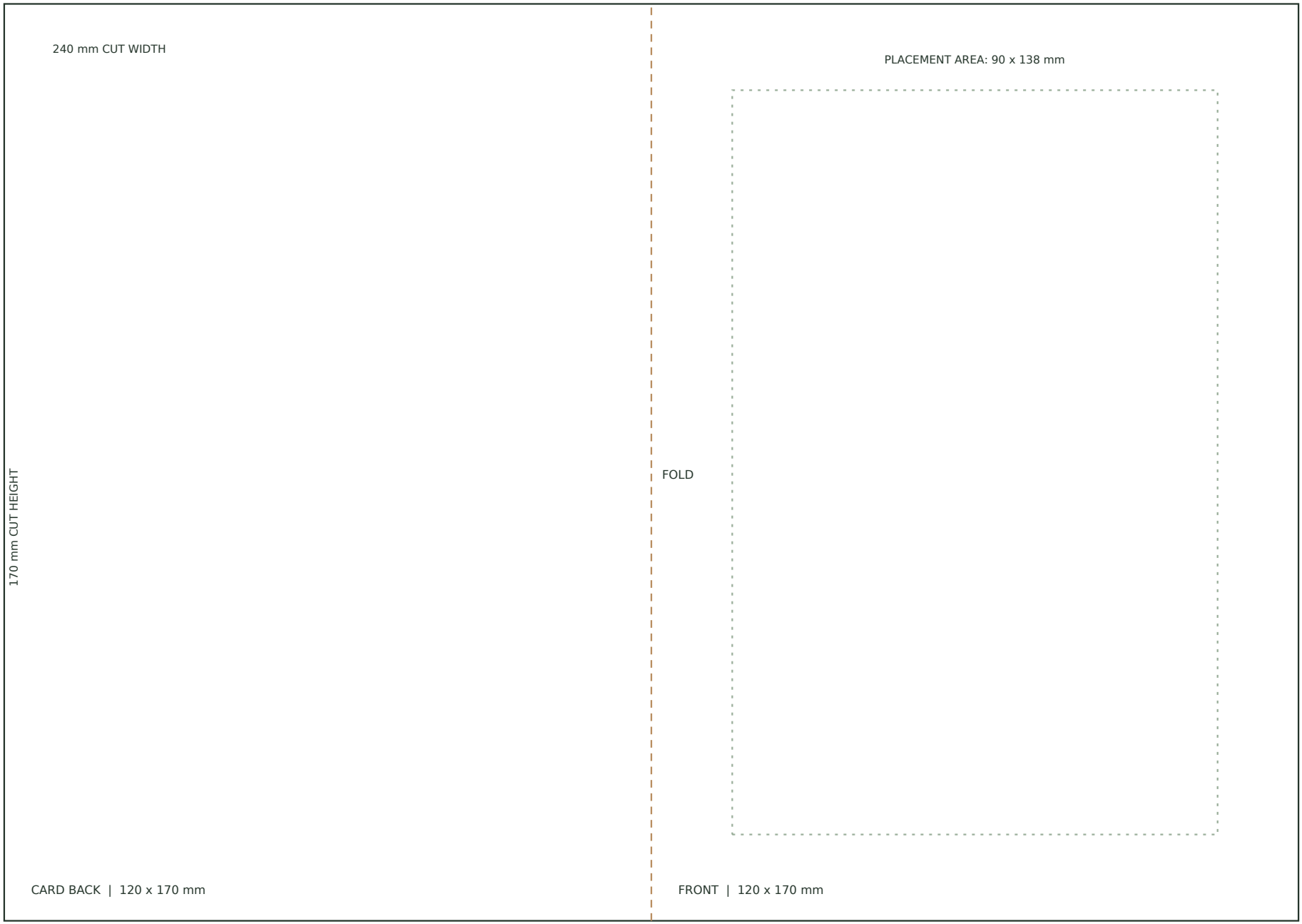
[2] RHS, *How to dry flowers and foliage at home*. Pressing for creative cards, material choices, moisture and mold cautions. Open cited source

[3] RHS, *How to press plants and make herbarium collections*. Clean collection records, layering and early paper inspection. Open cited source

All card dimensions, arrangement prompts, printable cutting outlines and diagrams in this Steadleaf Press edition are original editorial work. The RHS references support general pressing and moisture-control principles; they do not endorse this particular card pattern or adhesive. Card size is a measured design target, not a physically produced sample. No archival-longevity, border-import, safety-compliance or physical performance test is claimed.

STEADLEAF PRESS | STP-MAKE-F013 | CARD CUTTING PLAN | LETTER

50 mm CHECK BAR | PRINT AT 100% | NO FIT-TO-PAGE



CUT only solid outer line. FOLD dashed centre line. Set page LANDSCAPE.

Three original arrangement studies

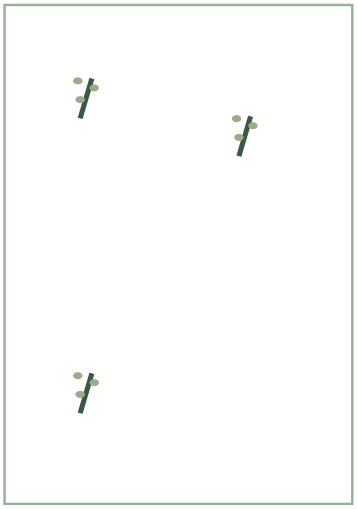
Small preview windows only. Use the full-size cut outline on page 1.



A Quiet corner



B One stem



C Three-point border

Species (known and safe): _____

Where sourced / permission: _____

Pressed on: _____ Absorbent paper changed: _____

Final dryness and mold check: _____

Adhesive label / dry time: _____

Envelope fit / destination rules checked: _____

One thing to simplify next time: _____

The botanical material is real and may fade, detach or become brittle. No longevity claim is made.

Use clean dry specimens only; never enclose damp or moldy plants.