

The Kansas Environment

Kansas is at the heart of the prairie region, which covers much of the Central Plains. The tallgrass prairie is located in eastern Kansas where tall (3 feet and higher) grasses and a variety of flowering plants can be found. Central Kansas is home to the mixed grass prairie where both short and tall grass species grow. The shortgrass prairie covers western Kansas with species such as Buffalo Grass and Blue Grama.

The prairie is a unique bioregion with an abundance of plants and animals all dependent on one another. For 65 million years fire and grazing naturally controlled its growth. Fire killed trees and the above ground parts of grasses, which allowed more light, warmth, and moisture to reach the soil.



Flint Hills, Kansas

The grasses were preserved by their intricate root system, reaching 15 feet and more underground. A recently burned prairie will grow taller, produce more flowers, and set more seed. Today only 1 to 2 percent of the nation's original tallgrass prairie is preserved. The majority of it is in the Flint Hills of Kansas.

Kansas history is shaped by the natural environment. Prairie grasses supported vast herds of buffalo which Native Americans hunted to fulfill their needs for shelter, clothing, and food. After 1854, settlers chose the rich bottomland near streams to locate their farms. The natural landscape also dictated what type of housing could be built. Sod houses and dugouts were common in western Kansas where trees were scarce.

At the end of the twentieth century, interest in ecology and conservation was renewed. Efforts are now being made to preserve and restore the natural landscape of Kansas.

Pressed Flowers

Supplies:

- Clear contact paper
- Flowers
- Paper towels
- Parchment paper
- Books or other weights
- Scissors
- String
- Hole punch



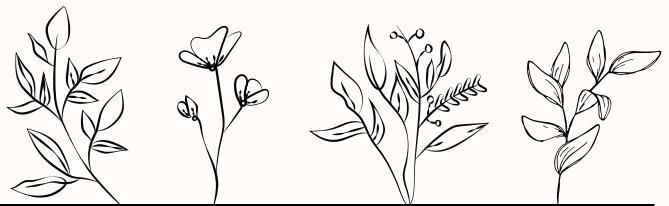
How to Press Flowers

1. Gather wildflowers or native grasses in your area.
2. Fold a piece of parchment paper and place it inside a hardcover book.
3. Place a paper towel inside the parchment paper.
4. Arrange flowers on the paper towel.
5. Close the book and place more weight on top.
6. Let the flowers dry for 1-2 weeks.

How to Seal the Flowers

1. Cut contact paper into desired shapes. You will need two matching pieces.
2. Peel one piece of contact paper and arrange pressed flowers on the sticky side.
3. Seal the flowers by peeling the second piece of contact paper and placing it on top of the flowers. Try your best to line up the edges of the two pieces.
4. Trim the edges as needed.
5. Punch a hole at the top and thread string through it (optional).

FIELD NOTES



Scientific Name: _____

Common Name: _____

Family: _____

Height: _____

Bloom Period: _____

Habitat: _____

Description: _____

