

# Flower Pounding

One of our “smashing” family events at DCWM has been flower pounding. Here is how you can reproduce the same art at home with helpful tips from our very own Wickenburg resident expert, Hartley Bennett.



## Supplies

- Alum
- Washing soda
- Muslin or cotton fabric
- Painter’s tape
- Pounding board or wood board
- Hammer
- Bucket and small container
- Iron and ironing board
- Scissors
- Plant material
- Paint stir stick
- Plastic tablecloth or covering

*“You can experiment with various types of hammers, but the small flat headed ones have worked best for me.”*

*-Hartley Bennett*

## Optional

- Fabric pens or paint
- Gloves

This activity is a 2-part process: preparing the fabric and the flower pounding. Read all information to ensure a successful flower print.

## Part 1

### Fabric Treatment

**Step 1:** Wash fabric using regular laundry detergent and 2 tablespoons of washing soda. **(Hint:** Can't find washing soda at the grocery store? Spread a thin layer of baking soda on a cookie sheet and cook at 400 degrees for 30 minutes. Voila, you have washing soda!)

**Step 2:** Prepare alum to soak fabric in a bucket. Add 2 cups of hot water and  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup alum for every yard of fabric.

**Step 3:** Place wet fabric in alum mixture. Mash down fabric and stir. Add more hot water if needed to cover fabric.

**Step 4:** Dissolve 1 teaspoon of washing soda per yard of fabric in  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup of hot water. Pour over fabric in alum mixture.

*"It will spurt and frizzle but is harmless and part of the process."*

**Step 5:** Allow fabric to soak 12 to 24 hours.

**Step 6:** Hand wring fabric and lay flat or hang to air dry.

**Step 7:** Once dry, iron fabric and cut to size.

*"It is wise to treat a lot of fabric at one time. Then you will have a stash for future flower pounding."*

## Part 2

### Flower Pounding

Step 1: Select foliage to pound and crush into the fabric. Roses, pansies, and green weeds work well. However, tulips, lilies and cactus flowers are often too “juicy” and might become a blob.



*“You will find that plant material does not always pound true to color. Many reds and purples come out as browns. Yellows and greens tend to produce the best results. Try everything as I have found that the most unlikely material such as field oats and tumbleweed yield excellent results.”*

**Step 2:** Trim the flowers and leaves you wish to press. Arrange on the fabric in a desired pattern.



*“With flowers, you will place them face down. If you use weeds, place the leaves face up as you want the veined structure that is most prominent on the back. If you have thick green centers, cut them away.”*

**Step 4:** Tape down foliage with painter’s tape. Cover all plant material.

**Step 5:** Flip over so fabric side is facing up and place on board.

**Step 5:** Pound plant material with a hammer!





**Step 6:** When you have pounded all the areas, remove tape and plant material. Repeat process if you want to add to your picture.

*“You must keep a journal of what you have pounded and where you collected it. It is nice to be able to tell an admirer the source of your plant material.”*

**Step 7:** When dry, press the entire piece with an iron on moderate heat. (**Warning:** The organic material will scorch if the iron is left in one area too long.)

**Step 8:** (Optional) Once set, outline the image in fabric pens or paint.

*\* Your results are not suitable for washing.*

*“Remember, if you follow the basic rules for fabric preparation you can go in any direction you want. There are no mistakes or “best” ways of doing things. You are the innovator!”*

*- Hartley Bennett*

