

Preserving Leaves



Even in the tropics you can find all the colours of autumn leaves!

As well as with the typically coloured autumn foliage found in cooler climes, there is also an array of magnificently coloured leaves of our rainforest and other native plant varieties - including the Blue Quandong - *Elaeocarpus grandis*, Plum Satinash - *Syzygium cryptophlebium* and Bleeding Heart - *Homolanthus populifolius* shown here.

The beauty of such coloured foliage, as well as autumn coloured varieties can be preserved to capture amazing hues before they disappear. This can also be used for some flowers, fruits and seeds.

Use freshly collected leaves and flowers. Do not use ones that have started to dry out. Find leaves that are several different colours so you will have a variety of coloured leaves when you finish.

Method #1

The Wax Paper Method
Place your leaf between two pieces of wax paper. Make sure that all parts of the leaf are between the pieces of paper. Cover with an old towel or cloth. Use a warm iron to seal the pieces of wax paper together. When you are finished, allow it to cool, then you may trim around your leaf. Be sure to leave a narrow margin around the leaf so the paper stays sealed.

Method #2

Make a solution of glycerine and water. Use twice as much water as you do glycerine. (For example 2 cups of water and one cup of glycerine) Pour this into a flat pan. Completely cover your leaves with the solution. You will have to weigh them down to keep them covered. Let them set for 2-6 days. The leaves will absorb the solution and will be soft and pliable. Take the leaves out of the solution and wipe with a paper towel. The leaves will stay soft and bendable indefinitely.

For further information please contact Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens on 07 4952 7300 or botanic@mackay.qld.gov.au or log onto www.mackayregionalbotanicgardens.com.au.