

TIPS & TRICKS FOR RESIN AND PRESSED FLOWERS

# FLOWER PRESERVATION GUIDE



CSILLA SZABO  
flower preservation artist



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## INTRODUCTION

# Hello, I'm Csilla, your guide in flower preservation world .

Some flowers carry a story within their petals – a bouquet from a wedding day, blooms from a loved one's memorial, or even the flowers from a first anniversary. Preserving these flowers let us hold onto that beauty and emotion for years to come. With resin and pressing techniques, we can capture those memories in a lasting, tangible form.



Flower preservation is a beautiful way to capture the color and texture of fresh flowers and enjoy them for years to come. Two popular methods for preserving flowers are resin encapsulation and flower pressing. This guide will walk you through each method with step by step instructions, expert tips, and solutions to common issues so that you can confidently create long lasting pieces.

*-Csilla*

**GATHERING & PREPARING SENTIMENTAL FLOWERS**

BEFORE YOU START, HERE ARE A FEW TIPS ON HANDLING THESE PRECIOUS FLOWERS:

- **TIMING MATTERS:**

THE FRESHER THE FLOWERS, THE BETTER. IF POSSIBLE, START WITHIN A DAY OR TWO AFTER THE EVENT, ASK YOUR COSTUMERS TO SEND OR DELIVER THEIR FLOWERS AS SOON AS THEY CAN. IN SOME CASES, IF THE FLOWERS ARE ARRIVING WILTED OR EVEN MOULDED, YOU CAN ALSO OFFER COLOUR REPLACEMENT (MOST OF THE COSTUMERS ARE HAPPY WITH THE IDEA)

- **SELECT FOR COLOR & SHAPE:**

SOME FLOWERS PRESERVE BETTER THAN OTHERS. ROSES, PEONIES, AND LILIES WORK WELL FOR PRESSING AND RESIN, WHILE DELICATE FILLERS LIKE BABY'S BREATH ADD TEXTURE. I SUGGEST TO DEFINITELY PRESS THE DELICATED FLOWERS AND THE MORE THICKER ONES IN A SEPARATE PRESSER

- **DRY THOROUGHLY:**

WHETHER YOU'RE PRESSING OR WORKING WITH RESIN, FULLY DRIED FLOWERS ARE ESSENTIAL. AIR DRYING, SILICA GEL, MICROWAVE PRESS, TRADITIONAL PRESS OR DEHYDRATOR ARE GREAT METHODS TO DRY FLOWERS QUICKLY WITHOUT LOSING COLOR.

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# Material and tools

## For resin preservation

- scissors, craft knife, tweezers
- air tight plastic containers for drying the flowers
- silica gel
- pan pastel, airbrush, paints, clear acrylic spray, brushes
- epoxy resin – a clear, UV-resistant resin for long lasting beauty, different types
- mixing supplies – use disposable cups and stirrers
- safety gear – gloves, mask, and ventilation are key
- vacuum chamber
- silicone molds
- torch or/and heat gun – to remove any air bubbles
- sanding sheets and blocks from 80-5000 grid
- isopropyl alcohol
- resin polish and machine for easier and more effective results
- dried flowers – completely dried and arranged petals or whole flowers.

## For flower pressing

- scissors, craft knife, tweezers
- press or heavy books – if you work with bridal and memorial flowers regularly, a presser is highly recommended. I work with traditional press, a wooden press, microwave press and a food dehydrator which is a lifesaver.
- blotting paper, essential for moisture absorption.
- mod podge or similar glue
- pan pastels, air brush, paints and uv resistant clear spray
- brushes, sponges
- frames, tools like screwdriver and drill, industrial glue or silicone for building the frame
- cleaning materials, clothes, glass cleaner
- fresh flowers – for best results, work with flowers as fresh as possible



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# Epoxy resin preservation

step by step guide

- choose and trim – select the flowers thoughtfully. Smaller buds work well for keepsakes, while petals of larger flowers can add a delicate touch. Always think ahead and dry the flowers based on the placed order, you have to make sure to dry them in the correct way.
- remove all the wilted and damaged petals from flowers
- sometimes the flowers aren't in the best shape when you receive them, submerging the whole bouquet (upside down), or just the individual flowers into room temperature tap water can help to bring them back to life
- if the roses are not really opened, you can turn the stem upside down and just gently roll it few times in between your palms, this helps to open the petals a little bit more
- most of the flowers has to be cut just by the flower head but some of them can be dried how is it. This is also depends on the costumers preferences
- using the silica gel in layers. Add a layer of silica to your bottom of the plastic box, I usually add about 2cm on the bottom, this helps to place the flowers securely in the sand
- for larger pieces – position flowers in your silica in nice and even shape, as they will dry that way and you can't manipulate after the drying. Make sure you cover the flowers completely, the uncovered parts can wilt and turn brown
- after covering, you can add more layers, until you placed them all
- try placing the flowers without touching each other and pour the silica in between the petals too, especially for larger flowers with more moisture
- for the best results, leave them to dry at least 4 weeks but longer is better
- after the flowers are completely dry, like paper, they are ready to preparing for resin
- gently remove them from silica sand, please be very slow as they are very delicate in dried stage
- after removing all the flowers, you can put your silica away or recharge them in oven if it's needed, they are usually comes with colour indicator beads, please check the package for instructions because different brands can react differently
- carefully taking one flower after other, make sure you clean the silica beads from between every petals, any hidden place, you won't be able to remove after it is in resin and they can be very annoying

- when you are done, try to make different designs, mock ups and send them to your customer for approval. If they are not happy with the design, there is still time to modify but after the resin is poured, there is no more option
- make sure, you keep the dried flowers in an air tight container with a light layer of silica on the bottom, to avoid collecting moisture from the air
- in case your flowers need colour correcting, you can now make them. Using pan pastels or air brush can be both a good option but in both ways, you have to seal them before placing into resin to avoid colour bleeding
- after customer approval you can start pouring
- first of all, you have to make sure you're using a deep pour resin with slow curing time. Other resins can burn the flowers. During the curing process the epoxy resins gets hot, if the curing is happening in a short period, that cause burning, the slow curing resins are made for a slow, minimal heat reaction curing process
- measure carefully – follow instructions precisely for a lasting, clear resin. Different types, different brands has different measurement instructions. Some if the needs to be measured by weight or by volume. PLEASE, READ THE INSTRUCTION .
- Mix thoroughly – stir slowly for about 5 minutes. To reduce bubbles the best way to use a vacuum chamber, you'll want a bubble-free finish to showcase these precious flowers. Working with flowers on a professional level requires this, you can't stir gentle enough to avoid all the micro bubbles.
- when the resin is ready, add a thin layer to the bottom of the mold and place the flowers the same way as your agreed with your customers. The best way is, to have the chosen arrangement's photo on front of you, on your phone, tablet and follow it step be step
- adding the first layer of flowers, you can pour the resin all over to flowers, soaking them in resin, pour between the petals etc
- using the torch or heat gun could be a good idea for eliminating little bubbles created during the pour but you can easily damage your flowers!!! I don't recommend using any heat source in this point, try to use a needle to pop them and check it time to time, if there is any bubbles stucked somewhere
- cover and leave it for about 12 hours or until the resin starts to set
- you can now repeat the whole pouring process (measure, mix, degass and pour), depending on your resin type, you can pour a thicker layer now (I am working with a 10cm deep pour resin) but usually pour about 5cm layer in one go
- leave it to cure about 12 hours again or until starts cure and repeat the process as many time it needs to cover the design
- make sure to check every time, no one wants a hair or dust in their wedding keepsake
- leave it to completely cure at least 48 hours

- demold with care – gently remove the piece from the mold and
- in my opinion, the hardest part is just now coming
- the sharp edges has to be sanded, also for a really professional look, the resin blocks needs an additional, top coat
- for the top coat needs to be prepared. I sand the block all around, give them a bath under the tap to remove the dust and than clean with alcohol, to remove all the stains
- to apply the top coat their is different methods
- using glue, liquid latex, cover the top and the sides of the block, after drying (can be 12 hours) your can turn around and pour the cover for the bottom
- for top coating, you will need a fast curing resin, special for top coating. These are usually cures quicker, and can handle higher humidity for a beautiful, glassy surface
- after the bottom, peel the glue off the piece and repeat the same on the top and sides
- the reason why we need to apply the glue is to protect the piece for dripping. All the dripped resin will come off with the glue
- the other option is a tape, which is made specially for resiners, this method is quicker but more pricey
- when you are applying the top part of the piece, you need to let the resin flow to the sides, this will creat a nice and even surface
- pour the resin in the middle of the piece and help to spread with hand (glowes on) or a spatula, applying heat with heat gun or torch can pop the micro bubbles and also if you are working from the center to the sides, the resin will level nicely and cover all the sides
- don't forget to cover your piece while curing
- the surface will cure relatively fast, about 12 hours but leave it to cure at least 24 hours before you remove the protection from the other side and recommended to keep it for an other 30 days for a complete cure. I am not keeping that long, after 2 weeks I am sending them to the costumers, had no problem till now

Following these steps you will make a beautiful keepsake!



# Flower pressing

## step by step

- choose wisely – Pick flowers with low moisture content for the best preservation if there is an option, in case of costum orders like bridal bouquet or memorial pieces you can use different technics
- in every case, it is important to consult with your costumer, asking if their has a exact idea because different layouts needs different pressing methods
- most of the cases you press petal by petals but pressing flowers in whole is common as well.
- make sure to remove the middle of the flowers, helping them to dry easier, making them thinner
- many flowers can be cut in half ( vertically) and pressed that way, this will give a nice look (this trick is really good with cala lilies and lisianthus)
- I am using two methods to press my flowers, using the microwave for pressing them and removing the moisture first and than put them in traditional press, placing the press in a large plastic box with a thin layer of silica gel on the bottom, this helps to remove the remaining moisture of the flowers. The other method is the food dehydrator. I layer the flowers in between foam sheets and press them, placing the press in the dehydrator for a good few hours, 6-7 hours, check them and put them back if it's necessary. This is a good way to keep the flower's colour as much as possible.
- check the flowers daily at the beginning in case of using traditional press and change the papers if necessary
- after the complete drying, this time can vary, depending on the pressing method, start to reconstruct your flowers
- use matte glue (mod podge) because in case of colour correction, the paint won't stick to the shiny spots and will look bad
- some people colour correct them before reconstruction, I don't, I always do after
- using pan pastels, acrylic paint and air brush can help you to get their colours closer to their original look but note, all the flowers will slightly change their colours, this is a natural process
- the dried flowers can naturally fade by time, in every case I add 2 or 3 layer of clear, uv resistant acrylic spray for extra protection



- arrange the flowers in different ways and send them to your costumer for approval
- after approval, glue them with modge and place some light weights on the top until dries
- make sure there are no stains, fingerprints, dust on the glass, brush over everything you can because you won't be able to do that after placing the glasses on their place
- when everything is secured to their place, you can add the second glass. I am using silicone for that, this will make the frame airtight (I attach both glass panels with silicone)
- add your wall hang hooks and done



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# Pro tips and tricks

Flower preservation tips for resin projects

Seal your flowers if you're adding color:

- If you've touched up your flowers with a little paint, be sure to seal them with a clear spray or varnish before putting them in resin. This keeps any color from bleeding into the resin and ruining your piece.

Choose the right resin for your project:

- For flowers, deep pour resin is the way to go! Regular casting resin can run hot and might burn your blooms. If you're making small items like pendants or rings, casting resin can work, but deep pour is a safer bet.
- When it's time for a top coat, use a resin that's humidity-resistant to keep things looking clear and glossy.

Perfect pouring conditions:

- Aim to work in a room that's around 22–26°C and under 55% humidity. Too much moisture in the air can lead to a cloudy film called amine blush.

What's amine blush?

- Sometimes, you'll notice a greasy or cloudy layer on top of your cured resin. This is amine blush—it happens when certain chemicals in the resin react with moisture or CO<sub>2</sub> in the air. It doesn't look great and can mess with adhesion if you're adding another layer.
- How to prevent it: try to pour resin in low humidity if you can. Some resins are specially made to resist blushing, so keep an eye out for those.
- How to fix it: if you do get amine blush, just wash it off with warm, soapy water, rinse, and let it dry before adding more layers.

Always degas your resin:

- Bubbles can make or break your resin project, so always degas your resin before pouring! Don't use a pressure pot or vacuum chamber with flowers already in the resin, instead, degas the resin itself.

Layer your resin:

- Pour in thin layers and don't let each one cure fully before the next—this keeps layers from looking too obvious or creating harsh lines.

Using heat mats? Be careful!

- Heat mats can speed up curing, but they can also overheat the resin and burn your flowers (I learned this the hard way on my first project!). Use them cautiously if you decide to try.

Make sure your piece is level:

- Before adding a top coat, double-check that your piece is level so you get a nice, even finish.

Catch any overflow:

- Keep a tray underneath your project to catch any resin that spills over. This saves your work area and makes cleanup easier!

Flatten flowers for shallow molds:

- For shallow molds, try to "open" flowers more (like roses) and press them flatter in silica so they won't stick out above the resin. If they do stick up, you might have to sand them down, which can mess up your design.

If flowers protrude, try plan B:

- If you end up with flowers sticking out, you can still save it! Wrap the piece with acetate sheets and secure them with hot glue, then add another layer of resin.

Add special touches:

- Little extras like ribbons or pins can add a fun, personal vibe to your project. Including a small gift with orders—like a keychain or bookmark—is a nice way to add an extra touch!

Seal delicate flowers:

- Some thin, delicate flowers like orchids or lisianthus can get translucent spots in resin. A quick spray of acrylic sealer or varnish can help them keep their color and texture

Adding special touches to your project:

- A little extra goes a long way! Try adding ribbons or pins to your project to make it more unique. I like to include a tiny gift, like a keychain or bookmark, with each order for an extra-special touch.

Sealing delicate flowers:

- Thin, delicate flowers like orchids or lisianthus can sometimes get translucent spots after being set in resin. A light spray of acrylic sealer or varnish before placing them in resin can help keep their color and texture intact.

Flower pressing tips:

Flower selection:

- Flowers like roses, peonies, and chrysanthemums press beautifully, and vibrant greens or delicate fillers can add lovely texture and dimension.

Separate flower types:

- Try to press similar types of flowers together since different flowers dry at different rates. This will help you achieve more consistent results.

Using silica gel before pressing:

- If you're drying flowers in silica gel, leave them in the gel for a few days. After removing them, let them sit in open air for a few hours—this "softens" the petals, making them easier to press without crushing.

Color correcting flowers:

- To brighten or adjust colors, I like to mix matte varnish with pan pastels and gently brush it onto the flowers (great when pan pastel alone doesn't give enough coverage). Don't be afraid to experiment with color, it can make your pieces even more stunning! Just be sure to check with customers first if they want color correction, so you're not spending hours on something they might not need.

Keeping colours fresh:

- For better color retention, store pressed flowers in a cool, dark place to prevent fading over time.



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# Troubleshooting common issues

## Resin preservation

- Why are there bubbles? – resin loves bubbles, unfortunately! To reduce them, mix slowly and use a heat gun to remove any that appear. Remember, for the best result, you have to use a vacuum chamber. You can't use the heat gun on flowers, but it's perfect for the top coat.
- Yellowing resin? – use UV protective resin and keep the final product out of sunlight to reduce yellowing. It is crucial to use good quality resin, I know it's expensive but for a lasting finish it is a must. All the resins will yellow over time, but with good quality and the right precautions, can be significantly slower the process.

## Pressed flowers

- Browning petals? – Flowers need to be fully dried before adding to the frame. Replace blotting paper daily on the first days, and then weekly to keep moisture away.
- Mould on flowers? – Change blotting paper regularly, especially with thicker flowers. Try to make the flowers as thin as possible, this helps to reduce the moisture. Removing the center of the flowers and pressing them separately is always a good idea, the delicate petals will dry quicker than the middle part.



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# Care and display

- Display suggestions:

Whether you display in a shadow box, as a resin block or framed on the wall, important to avoid direct sunlight.

- Long term care:

Dust gently and keep pieces in a dry area.



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# Trusted suppliers and resources

Here are a few of my favorite places to shop for resin, molds, and preservation tools. These are suppliers I've come to trust, and I'm happy to pass them along to you!

- Epoxy resin deep and casting resin:

EPODEX



- Top coat

RESIN PRO - ART PRO DELUXE



- Silica gel

WISEDRY



- Vacuum chamber

RESINERS

I hope this guide helps you create beautiful, lasting memories for your clients, friends, or even for yourself.

There's so much meaning in each petal, and preserving them is a labor of love.

So take your time, enjoy the process, and know that every piece you create will be cherished for years to come!

Thank you for reading,

*-Csilla Szabo*

