

TECHNICAL NOTES

A POCKET HERBARIUM FOR RANGE MEN

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It is often valuable to have mounted plant specimens available in the field. Standard mounting techniques are not satisfactory: the mounts are too large and fragile. Range men have tried several methods with only partial success, but mounting the plants with sheets of self-laminating plastic will provide a rugged field reference.

Mounts can be made small enough to carry in a pocket. No pressing is necessary for most range plants. They retain color

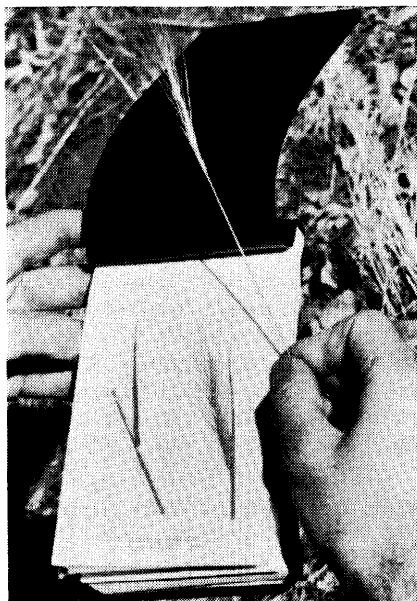


FIGURE 1. A pocket herbarium being used to check the identification of a grass plant.

and shape and do not fall apart, even after several years use. The mounts can be used in wind or rain without damage. Plants mounted at any stage of growth stay together and appear natural.

Mounts can be punched and placed in a small loose-leaf binder, Figure 1. Range researchers and administrators will find that one of these "pocket herbaria", when supplied to seasonal help, will cut training time and reduce mistakes in plant identification.

Only two or three minutes are required to prepare each mount since only woody plants need to be pressed. The self-laminating plastic is placed on a flat surface, adhesive side up. The plant and a label are placed face down on

the plastic. A backing sheet is pressed in place, and the mount is trimmed to size on a paper cutter. Another sheet of adhesive plastic makes the best backing but increases the cost. This makes a completely waterproof and flexible mount. Acetate plastic, tracing cloth, and botany paper all make satisfactory backing material at much less cost.

Self-laminating plastic is available from most stationers and office suppliers in a variety of weights and sizes. Prices vary from 40 to 75 cents per square foot. Materials for a 4 by 6 inch mount using botany paper backing costs about 12 cents.