

A lightweight, temporary alternative to a field press is an A4-size notebook. A more robust temporary press can also be made from interwoven strips of bamboo.

Remember: after twelve to twenty-four hours the specimens in the press should be examined and rearranged if necessary to improve the presentation of the botanical material.

### 11.5.2 Drying botanical specimens

In dry climates, drying the specimens is usually relatively easy. Artificial heat is usually not required. However, there must be sufficient airflow between the specimens in the press to ensure that the samples dry quickly, otherwise the specimens may become mouldy. Therefore, even in dry environments, the collections should be checked daily and any damp sheets/newspaper should be replaced by dry sheets (Victor et al. 2004). This method is not suitable in the wet humid tropics, where the drying of collections and keeping them dry can be very challenging. Several useful publications suggest excellent solutions to drying specimens in the wet tropics (e.g. Beard 1968; De Wit 1980; Fuller and Barbe 1981). In all instances, the best policy is to

p. 271 ↪

p. 272 ↪

get material to a herbarium or museum as quickly as possible, because they have the appropriate facilities and resources to deal with these materials.