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## News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Nicole Blas prepares a flower for pressing in the summer flowering plants class at IU Kokomo.

## Science skills bloom in summer flowering plant class at IU Kokomo

**KOKOMO, Ind.** — As Kelli Martin prepares a flower for pressing, she’s not just creating art — she’s learning about plant biology and life cycles.

Martin, from Carmel, is one of the students in the summer flowering plants class at Indiana University Kokomo. It is a popular science option, especially among non-science majors, and the class filled quickly when registration began in the fall. Carrie

Kinsey, biology lab supervisor, opened a second section of the class to accommodate the demand.

Each student presses at least 10 plants to present, creating museum quality displays with cards detailing the type of flower it is, and where it was found. In class, they practice technique with grocery store flowers, preparing them to press flowers they find on their own, as part of the fieldwork requirement.

“Flower pressing is a kind of folk art, a lost art,” said Kinsey. “This class teaches plant science and life cycles, but we’ll also learn some history and cultural significance of the various flowers.”

In addition to their pressed flowers, students also will photograph at least 40 flowers, and complete at least 10 flower drawings.

Martin lays one stem on blotter paper, using scissors to remove a few extra leaves, and turning the blossoms for the best effect. Gently, she covers it with blotter paper, then presses down hard with both hands, before placing cardboard over it. She stands on her tiptoes to put all her weight on it, before carrying the bundle over to the class press.

Kinsey helps students load their flowers in layers into the wooden press, and then works with them to tighten the straps around it, creating maximum pressure to flatten the flowers.

Each student takes home a press, to use to press at least 10 flowers during the summer session. Martin looks forward to pressing blossoms from a day lily in her yard. She added the class is her last to complete her degree in communication arts.

“It’s real life, everybody loves flowers,” she said. “This class gives me a hands-on option to earn a science credit. I’ll use the information, it’s not just something you memorize and forget. I had no idea there were so many types and varieties of flowers. When I’m driving home, I recognize them along the road now. It’s given me a different eye.”

For Cash Lamberg, a sophomore business major, the class has helped him with the landscaping job he’s held since eighth grade.

“I’m learning about a variety of things I see every day,” the Tipton resident said. “I was surprised by how many kinds of wildflowers there are in Indiana. I like it a lot.”

Emily Lytle has enjoyed her independent fieldwork, searching for flowers to photograph and draw. Lytle, a psychology major from Kokomo, took her grandfather out near the Kokomo Reservoir to find specimens.

“I was very proud of myself that I was able to identify the flowers we found,” she said. “It’s a science class, but you’re not stuck in the classroom, and when you dissect a flower, there’s no blood and guts.”

As an elementary education major, Nicole Blas, Merrillville, is excited to use some of what she’s learned in her classroom.

“I can definitely use the knowledge I’m gaining in this class to teach science concepts,” she said. “I like to look at plants, but I’ve never done anything with flowers. This is a new experience for me.”

*Indiana University Kokomo serves north central Indiana.*

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