

How to Preserve Cattails

I have been cutting cattails in the fall and have preserved them by using hair spray which must be done right away and have never had them open. I have had them in my home for years.

The hair spray trick also works with pussy willows.

Hi JoAnn from S.D., Years ago I preserved cattails with aerosol hairspray (Do not use a pump hairspray). I sprayed each cattail including stem with hairspray outside. I let them dry completely before bringing the cattails into my home. If I saw one cattail beginning to burst open, I would spray it again and they kept just fine for years and years. I hope this helps.
Doreen1020~in Pa.

Cattails Bring Autumn into Your Home

But you must preserve them properly lest they fill the house with great globs of fluff

While canoeing down Rockhold Creek, I spotted some *beautiful cattails along the banks. I cut a dozen to bring in* for autumn decoration. However, unless they are properly preserved, they will rupture by about mid-December and fill the house with great globs of fluff.



Use one of two methods to preserve cattails indefinitely. For either way to work, the cattails should be dry.

One way is to dip them into a diluted solution of Elmer's glue. Add one part Elmer's glue to nine parts water and mix thoroughly. I've made the ideal dipping container from a 24-inch piece of plastic pipe with a cap glued to one end. Others use one of those half-moon dishes for holding and buttering individual cobs of corn.

To seal the cattails in diluted Elmer's glue, dip or slowly spin each cattail in the container for a few seconds. Stand each cattail separately so they do not touch each other until they dry, which may require eight to 10 hours depending on the humidity.

Use this method, and your cattails won't be shiny after they dry.

The other method of preserving cattails is to spray them with a cheap hair spray rich in lacquer. The cheaper the hair spray, the better. If you are going to treat several cattails, spray outdoors to avoid inhaling the fumes. Next stand them separately until they dry, usually in less than an hour.

The ideal container for standing cattails upright after treatment is a pail of sand. One pail of sand can support many cattails.