

Sylvia Reynolds' tips on pressing aquatics, including charophytes

Wash the charophyte material first if muddy. Then let it spread out in a (shallow) dish of clean water, bearing in mind that you may have more than one species. Slide a sheet of shiny-surfaced card (approx. A5) from one side of the dish under the charophytes and gently lift the card so that the plants remain spread out and the water runs off. I put this very wet card in my plant press between thick sheets of newspaper and initially change it frequently, perhaps after half an hour, then after another hour and maybe once again that day. I would change the paper again the next day, and again each day until the plants and paper are completely dry. I find that with frequent changes soon after pressing, the material and card dries very quickly. The charophytes tend to stick to the card, not the newspaper. Approx. A5 card with the specimen(s) covered by another sheet of card to keep it rigid is quite a good size for sending a specimen off for checking.

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