Blackwell
BOTANICALS

From field to frame, these dried works
of art preserve more than just flowers.

"I'm outside from March through October harvesting," artist Anne Blackwell Thompson says, noting that she harvests mostly along the East Coast and throughout the South. "There's just something so magical about being outside in these historical gardens and beautiful properties. I just absolutely love it." (Below) Anne pulls inspiration from her collection of antique pressed botanicals.

A nne Blackwell Thompson's love story with pressed botanicals started with a magazine ad, when a pair of framed pieces caught her eye and compelled her to track down the artist, Stuart Thornton. An apprenticeship in Italy and a decade later, Anne now spends her days creating beautiful pressed pieces that she hopes will encourage people to bring nature into their homes.

"It's kind of a way of bringing in a memory of a hydrangea that grew in a grandmother's yard or peonies or irises that were in your bouquet when you were married," she says. "They're not necessarily your irises, but it's a remembrance."

She harvests a wide variety of plant materials from historical gardens and other properties around the country, and while every plant is handled differently, there are two things that every piece requires: time and attention.

From changing out the blotting paper in the presses to maintaining the ideal climate conditions, Anne has perfected the drying process over time, and it can take six to nine months to complete a piece.

Whether it be wisteria, orchids, or something more exotic—like water lilies harvested from Longwood Gardens in Pennsylvania—Anne remembers the details behind each piece, and she enjoys sharing their stories with her buyers. "That brings people along for the journey, for the experience," she says. "There's a little bit of a story with each one."

See more of Anne's work at *blackwellbotanicals.com.*

TEXT BY BETHANY ADAMS
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Anne is the former artist in residence at Tuckahoe Plantation in Virginia and will serve as the 2021 artist in residence at Ladew Topiary Gardens in Monkton, Maryland. She also enjoys collaborating on large-scale commercial projects. "It's great fun to kind of flex the muscles and work on some of those pieces as well," she says.