

St. Norbert College

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Ask the Abbot

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6-2019

**I heard St. Norbert is home to a collection of dried plants that contains tens of thousands of species. Is this true? If so, where did all those plants come from?**

Emily Schiltz '20

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## June 2019

### Question:

I heard St. Norbert is home to a collection of dried plants that contains tens of thousands of species. Is this true? If so, where did all those plants come from?

Emily Schiltz '20

### Answer:

Dear Emily,

Ah yes, I can immediately call to mind the herbarium of which you speak. It bears the name of its curator: The Keefe Herbarium.

You see, my dear confrère Anselm Keefe had an abiding interest in the richness of plant life with which the Creator of All Things has blessed our earthly home. A biology professor of deserved renown (and, indeed, in due course dean of the college), Keefe had scientific friends around the globe whose own botanical interests prompted them to share preserved specimens with others of similar mind. In this manner and over many, many years, our De Pere scholar was able to assemble and preserve his herbarium – his collection of pressed and dried plants – and bequeath it as a very significant resource to new generations of students and botanists.

So large is the herbarium indeed, that its size, scope and intrinsic value is still being assessed. Some conjecture that there may be more than 20,000 plant species in all.

Today, the Keefe Herbarium is housed in our new [Gehl-Mulva](#)



### Ask the Abbot

As the founder of St. Norbert College, and having a prime seat in the center of campus throughout the years, I, Abbot Bernard Pennings, hold the answers to many of your burning questions about the college.

[Submit Your Question](#)

**Science Center** (a facility that would have been truly beyond the imagination of us all in the earliest years of our dear college). In fact, students taking classes in natural sciences can still observe the specimens under laboratory conditions. As you can suppose, the specimens are fragile as well as valuable, so only those with a certain level of training may handle them directly.

*Responses to “Ask the Abbot” questions are penned by St. Norbert College staff in the name of Abbot Bernard Pennings, who founded St. Norbert College in 1898.*

## St. Norbert College

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