



Send flowers & Gifts Online
www.flowersforafrica.com

Flower Care

Beautiful bouquets of cut flowers can turn any room into a garden. Whether you receive them as a gift, buy them yourself or grow your own, sometimes even the best gardeners have trouble keeping their cut flowers fresh and blooming indoors. A lot depends on how fresh the flowers were when you bought them, but there are some tips that can get your flowers off to a running start and keep them blooming.

What to Look for When Selecting Cut Flowers - Clean and Healthy

- Flower stems should be green and smooth, not slimy
- Water should smell fresh
- No broken stems or drooping buds

Before You Put them into the Vase

- Keep cut flowers cool, until you can get them into water
- Make a fresh cut an inch or two up the stem, while stems are under water
- Make sure the vase and cutting tools are clean
- Remove any leaves that will be below the water surface
- Use the packet of flower food that comes with your flowers

Caring for Your Cut Flowers - Keep Them Blooming

- Keep cut flowers out of direct sunlight and drafts
- Change the water frequently (Every other day)
- Make a fresh cut each time you change the water

Good Choices for Long Lasting Cut Flowers

- **Alstroemerias** (6-14 days) Very popular, even though most people wouldn't know them by name. However they are sensitive to fluoride in water and ethylene gas. Keep away from produce.
- **Carnations** (7-14 days) Carnations are extremely dependable. They just keep coming out with new varieties and what colors they can't breed, they simply dye.
- **Delphiniums** (7-14 days) You can't beat Delphiniums for shades of blue and purple. Like Alstroemeria, these are sensitive to ethylene gas.
- **Lilies** (7-14 days) Choose sprays with a few slightly opened lower buds. Remove the anthers to prevent pollen from coming in contact with clothing and staining.
- **Roses** (6-12 days) The classic. And with over 20,000 varieties, they never get boring.
- **Sunflowers** (6-12 days) Generally available in late summer. Sunflowers can be top heavy, so use a vase that can support them.

Gerbera Daisy

1. Remove plastic protective cups from the flower.
2. While holding the stems under water in a sink or under running water, cut about one inch off each stem with a sharp knife or shears. DO NOT let the newly cut end dry off before transferring it back to your arrangement or other container.
3. Water to which a good **floral preservative** has been added is the best solution in which to arrange fresh cut daisies. Using it as recommended will provide additional days of vase life. Avoid using water from a water softener.
4. Immediately after the stems are cut, place your daisies in a deep vase of warm preservative solution (about 100 degrees F). If possible leave them in a cool dark room or refrigerator to 'condition' for 2 or 3 hours after arranging.
5. Temperature is key to the lifespan of flowers. Display your fresh cut gerbera daisy arrangements in a cool area out of direct sunlight and drafts.
6. Daisies are thirsty flowers. It is important to check to see that the vase is full and add preservative solution often. Be sure foam materials are completely saturated and the container is full daily.
7. Gerbera stems are highly susceptible to bacteria blockage. This may cause the head to droop over. Use clean water and replenish preservatives every 1-2 days.

Iris

1. Remove any leaves that may be under water.
2. While holding the stems under water in a sink or under running water, cut about one inch off each stem with a sharp knife or shears. DO NOT let the newly cut end dry off before transferring it back to your arrangement or other container.
3. Water to which a good **floral preservative** has been added is the best solution in which to arrange fresh cut iris. Using it as recommended will provide additional days of vase life. Avoid using water from a water softener.
4. Immediately after the stems are cut, place your iris in a clean, deep vase of warm preservative solution (about 100 degrees F). If possible leave them in a cool dark room or refrigerator to 'condition' for 2 or 3 hours after arranging.
5. Be careful! DO NOT bump the tips of your iris.
6. Temperature is key to the lifespan of flowers. Display your fresh cut iris arrangements in a cool area out of direct sunlight and drafts, to extend lifespan.
7. Iris are thirsty flowers. It is important to check to see that the vase is full and add preservative solution often. Be sure foam materials are completely saturated and the container is full daily.

Tulips

1. Leave tulips in the wrap and place in a vase of water under a light source, for about an hour before arranging. This will help to keep the tulips upright for longer. Tulips tend to curve towards the light.
2. Remove any leaves that may be under water.
3. While holding the stems under water in a sink or under running water, cut about one inch off each stem with a sharp knife or shears. DO NOT let the newly cut end dry off before transferring it back to your arrangement or other container.
4. Water to which a good **floral preservative** has been added is the best solution in which to arrange fresh cut tulips. Using it as recommended will provide additional days of vase life. Avoid using water from a water softener.

5. Immediately after the stems are cut, place your tulips in a clean, deep vase of warm preservative solution (about 100 degrees F). If possible leave them in a cool dark room or refrigerator to 'condition' for 2 or 3 hours after arranging.
6. Temperature is key to the lifespan of flowers. Display your fresh cut tulip arrangements in a cool area out of direct sunlight and drafts.
7. Tulips are heavy drinking flowers. It is important to check to see that the vase is full and add preservative solution often. Be sure foam materials are completely saturated and the container is full daily.

Lilies

1. Remove any leaves that may be under water.
2. While holding the stems under water in a sink or under running water, cut about one inch off each stem with a sharp knife or shears. DO NOT let the newly cut end dry off before transferring it back to your arrangement or other container.
3. Water to which a goohas been added is the best solution in which to arrange fresh cut lilies. Using it as recommended will provide additional days of vase life. Avoid using water from a water softener.
4. Immediately after the stems are cut, place your lilies in a clean, deep vase of warm preservative solution (about 100 degrees F). If possible leave them in a cool dark room or refrigerator to 'condition' for 2 or 3 hours after arranging.
5. Temperature is key to the lifespan of flowers. Display your fresh cut lily arrangements in a cool area out of direct sunlight and drafts.
6. Lilies are thirsty flowers. It is important to check to see that the vase is full and add preservative solution often. Be sure foam materials are completely saturated and the container is full daily.
7. Any lilies received should have the pollen stamens removed as they open. This will enhance the life of the lily and prevent any staining from the pollen. If you get any lily pollen on your clothing DO NOT rub off with your hands (rubs pollen deeper into the fabric). Use a toothbrush or a dry towel to brush off pollen.

Roses

1. Remove any leaves that may be under water.
2. While holding the stems under water in a sink or under running water, cut about one inch off each stem with a sharp knife or shears. DO NOT let the newly cut end dry off before transferring it back to your arrangement or other container.
3. Water to which a good **floral preservative** has been added is the best solution in which to arrange fresh cut roses. Using it as recommended will provide additional days of vase life. Avoid using water from a water softener.
4. Immediately after the stems are cut, place your roses in a clean, deep vase of warm preservative solution. If possible leave them in a cool dark room or refrigerator to 'condition' for 2 or 3 hours after arranging.
5. Temperature is key to the lifespan of flowers. Display your fresh cut rose arrangements in a cool area out of direct sunlight and drafts.
6. Wilted Roses may be revived by placing them under water. Submerge the entire rose under water in a sink or bathtub. In 20 to 60 minutes, the rose should have absorbed enough water to replenish itself. While submerged, cut off 1 inch of the stem using a sharp knife or scissors.
7. Roses are thirsty flowers. It is important to check to see that the vase is full and add preservative solution often. Be sure foam materials are completely saturated and the container is full daily.

Why Use a Flower Preservative?

The simple answer to this question is that flower preservatives are designed to make your flowers last as long as possible. Most preservatives have three main ingredients that help achieve this:

A Germicide

Cut flowers need to take up clean water to stop them wilting. Germicides keep the vase water clean by killing bacteria, fungi and other micro-organisms that always proliferate in vases of cut flowers. These micro-organisms are on all flower stems, the vase surface and even in tap water. They feed on sugar, which is contained in the sap that leaks out of the cut flower stem ends. Happy bugs also multiply and can very quickly block the cut stem ends. Stick a plaster over your mouth and try to suck up water and you'll know how the flower feels in dirty water! Common germicides used in preservatives are chlorine or bromine.

Sugar

Flowers need sugar to open and keep those colourful petals bright. Sugar is also needed to keep fragrant flowers smelling so good. When they are on the plant this sugar comes from the leaves, where it is made during photosynthesis. Once you cut a flower off the plant and place it inside where it is too dark for photosynthesis to occur, that sugar is gone, and the flower dies. The sugar in a preservative is taken up through the cut stem end and feeds the flowers and buds, keeping them alive. Because micro-organisms thrive on sugar, however, don't ever add sugar without a germicide as this will cause a bacterial soup in the vase water before you can blink.

Acidifier

Cut flowers take up far more water if the water is slightly acid in nature. A pH of 3.5 is ideal. So, many preservatives contain a gentle acid, like citric acid, that will slightly acidify the water. Vinegar (acetic acid) will also work fine. Incidentally it's not entirely certain why cut flowers take up more water when it's slightly acidic.

Make your own Preservative

Home mixes can be as effective as commercial preservatives & easy to make too.

- 1 teaspoon sugar
 - 1 teaspoon household bleach
 - 2 teaspoons lemon or lime juice
 - 1 quart lukewarm water
- OR
- 3 pinches (0.3g) of citric acid.