

Flowers 101 – From Seed to Vase

Harvesting Your Flowers

1. Use clean sharp snips and pruners.
2. Harvest in the coolest part of the day, early morning or in the evening.
3. Take your water bucket or container with you to the garden.
4. Cut at the appropriate stage. The general rule is to cut when 1/3 to 1/2 open. Once the flower is pollinated, the blooms fade much faster, and if they are picked too soon, they may not open and can wilt.
5. Take the longest stems you can. However, using shorter flowers in smaller vases works beautifully, too.
6. Use floral food, it works. It contains sugar, an acidifier and a biocide. It encourages water uptake and controls bad bacteria. If you start doing a lot of flower arranging buy in bulk and put a jar with a measuring spoon in the area you arrange your flowers.
7. Check the water level in the vase every day, especially in smaller vases that lose water quickly. Change the water as often as you can, every day is great, every 2 to 3 days will work. Add more flower food when you change the water.

Care After Harvest

1. Remove all the lower leaves while still in the garden, if you can, and be sure no leaves are under water. If they are left on, bacteria will thrive and stop the stem from taking up the water.
2. Always use clean buckets and vases.
3. Condition your flowers. Place your flowers in cool water overnight or at least for a few hours.
4. Recut the stem for better water uptake. If using woody stems, as soon as you harvest the stem, cut the stem end vertically about an inch or more in the middle of the stem with pruners or snips and place in cool water immediately for conditioning.
5. Place flowers in a cool, shady spot away from ripening fruit and vegetables (they may emit ethylene gas which can shorten vase life).



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