

Tap water is suitable for most freshly cut flowers and is a convenient choice for filling a vase. Clean equipment, fresh stem cuts, and regular water changes usually matter more than choosing filtered or bottled water.

Why ordinary tap water is often suitable

After flowers are cut, they still need to take up water to replace moisture lost through leaves and petals. For a typical mixed bouquet, most household tap water provides what the stems need without causing harm.

Tap water may contain minerals or disinfectants, and its makeup differs between locations. Their presence alone does not mean the water is unsuitable. If your tap water is safe to drink and does not have an unusual smell, it is generally reasonable to use in a vase.

Some types of flowers and greenery can react more strongly to certain water conditions. If one kind of flower regularly wilts sooner than expected in your home, even with careful handling, trying a different water source can help you assess whether the water is a factor.

Situations for choosing different water

Water treated by a household softener may contain extra sodium. Too much sodium can harm plants, so choose tap water that has not passed through the softener if that option is available. A separate tap or one that bypasses the softener may supply untreated water.

Use another suitable source if your tap water smells strongly, looks discolored, or is covered by a notice advising against its use. Running a discolored tap for a while may clear the water, but during an active advisory, follow the instructions from your water provider.

A filter can be helpful if it removes a specific problem from your water supply. Filtering is not needed for every bouquet, and the result depends on which substances the filter is designed to remove.

Preparing stems and vase water

Careful preparation encourages water uptake and helps keep the vase clean. Begin soon after you bring the flowers home.

1. Clean the vase using soap and water, then rinse it thoroughly. Remains from an earlier arrangement can support microbial growth.
2. Add fresh, room temperature tap water. If the bouquet includes flower food, follow the packet instructions when mixing it into the water.
3. Take off any leaves that would be under the water. Leaves left submerged can break down and dirty the vase water.
4. Using clean, sharp scissors or a knife, cut a small piece from the bottom of each stem. This exposes a fresh surface through which the stem can take up water.
5. Put the stems into the vase soon after cutting them. Look at the water level daily and add more when needed.

Maintaining clean, fresh water

Replace the water every two days or so, and change it earlier if it becomes cloudy. Rinse the vase, discard decaying plant material, and recut the stems before placing them back in fresh water. Cloudiness may indicate microbial growth, which can reduce how well stems absorb water.

Place the flowers away from direct sunlight, heaters, and ripening fruit. Warmth makes flowers lose water faster. Ripening fruit can give off ethylene, a gas that speeds up aging in some flowers.

For most cut arrangements, regular tap water is a sensible choice. If flowers fade quickly, first check that the vase is clean, the stems have been cared for, and the arrangement is positioned appropriately in the room.

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