

Keep cut poppies from dropping petals too soon by choosing stems with colored buds, putting them in clean water, and keeping them cool. Handle the flowers gently and accept that open poppies are naturally short lived.

Choose the right stage

If you are cutting poppies from the garden, look for buds that show some petal color but have not fully opened. These have more time ahead of them than flowers already displaying all their petals. A bloom that has been open outdoors for several days may shed soon after it is cut.

Cut in the cool of the morning and take a container of water with you. Use clean, sharp snips and place each stem in the water promptly. Avoid squeezing the buds or brushing the petals. Poppy petals are delicate, and rough handling can damage them before the arrangement reaches the vase.

Give stems clean water

Choose a clean vase and fill it with fresh, cool water. Remove any leaves that would sit below the waterline. Submerged leaves can decay and make the water dirty. Leave enough room between stems so the flowers are not pressed tightly together.

Check the water every day. Replace it if it looks cloudy, and rinse the vase before refilling it. You can also trim a little from the stem ends with clean snips. Lift the stems gently while you work, then return them to water. Do not hold an open flower by its petals.

Some growers briefly sear the cut ends of poppy stems before placing them in water. This is a traditional method, but it will not stop petals from aging or guarantee a longer vase life.

Keep the arrangement cool

Set the vase away from direct sun, heaters, and warm appliances. A cool room is a better choice than a hot windowsill. Keep the flowers away from drafts and busy spots where people might brush against them.

Give the blooms space to open. If a stem leans against a wall or another flower, its petals may catch as it moves. There is no need to mist the flowers or touch the petals to check them. Watch from a short distance instead.

Remove faded blooms as they begin to shed. A fallen petal does not necessarily mean the other flowers are about to drop. Individual buds can open and age at different times, especially if they were cut at different stages.

Questions about cut poppies

Why are the petals falling off so quickly?

The flower may have been fully open before it was cut, or it may have been handled roughly. Heat can also shorten the life of cut flowers.

Will a closed poppy bud open in a vase?

A bud that is already showing color may open in water. Very tight, immature buds are less reliable.

Should I pull the bud covering off?

Leave it alone. The covering usually loosens as the flower opens, and pulling it can damage the petals underneath.

Can I stop an old bloom from shedding?

No. Petal drop is part of the flower's natural life. Remove the spent bloom and enjoy the remaining buds.

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