

To make a simple homemade flower food, dissolve one teaspoon of sugar in one quart of clean water and pour it into a clean vase. Change the solution daily, and do not mix household cleaners or other additives into it.

Start with a clean vase

Wash the vase with dish soap and water, then rinse it thoroughly before adding the flowers. A clean container gives the stems a better place to sit and makes it easier to notice when the water begins to turn cloudy.

Fill the vase with enough water to cover the lower part of the stems without submerging the leaves. Use room temperature water unless you have care instructions for your particular flowers that say otherwise.

If you have a packet of flower food, follow its label rather than adding sugar to it. Commercial packets are formulated for cut flowers, so a homemade solution is not a direct substitute.

Make a small batch

Measure one teaspoon of ordinary table sugar and stir it into one quart of water until it dissolves. Make only enough for the vase you are filling. Pour the solution into the clean vase, then add the flowers.

Sugar can provide a source of energy for cut flowers, but it can also encourage microbes to grow in the water. That is why a homemade sugar solution needs frequent changing. It is not a way to leave a bouquet unattended for longer.

Plain water is also a reasonable choice, particularly if you would rather keep the routine simple. Fresh water and a clean vase matter more than adding a collection of ingredients.

Prepare the stems

Before arranging the flowers, remove any leaves that would sit below the waterline. Submerged leaves can decay and make the water unpleasant. Keep the leaves higher on the stems if you like how they look.

Use clean, sharp scissors or garden snips to trim a little from the bottom of each stem. Place the stems in the vase promptly. A fresh cut helps provide an open surface for the stems to take up water.

Set the arrangement away from direct sun and heat sources. A cooler spot can help flowers last longer, and it gives the vase a quieter place in the room.

Keep the mixture simple and safe

Homemade recipes often suggest ingredients from the kitchen or cleaning cupboard. More ingredients do not necessarily make better flower food, and some combinations can be hazardous.

- Do not mix bleach with vinegar, ammonia, or other cleaners. Dangerous gases can result.
- Skip aspirin and other medicines. They are not needed for this simple solution.
- Keep the vase and any prepared solution out of reach of children and pets.
- Discard the solution if it becomes cloudy or develops an unpleasant smell.

Each day, empty the vase, wash and rinse it, and add fresh water or a newly made sugar solution. Trim the stems again if needed, and remove faded flowers as they appear.

A little attention is often enough to make an arrangement feel cared for. Keep the water fresh, notice how the flowers change, and enjoy them while they last.

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