

To preserve a birthday bouquet, dry or press the flowers while they are still fresh, then keep them away from moisture and direct sun. You can save the whole arrangement by air drying suitable stems, or press a few favorite blooms for a frame or album.

Air dry flowers from the bouquet

Air drying works well for roses, lavender, and other flowers with fairly sturdy petals. Delicate blooms may shed, and thick, fleshy flowers can be difficult to dry evenly. Choose stems without brown patches or signs of mold, and start before the flowers begin to wilt.

1. Remove the bouquet wrapping and take off leaves that you do not want to keep. Leaves can trap moisture and may curl as they dry.
2. Gather a few stems into a small bundle and tie them together with string. Keep different flower types in separate bundles if their stems vary greatly in thickness.
3. Hang the bundles upside down in a dark, dry place with good air circulation. Leave space between them so air can reach the flowers.
4. Check the blooms after about a week. They are ready when the petals and stems feel dry rather than cool or damp. Depending on the flowers and conditions, drying can take several weeks.
5. Handle the dried stems gently. Put them in a dry vase, or tie them together with a ribbon to recall the original bouquet.

Flowers often change color as they dry. Keeping them out of direct sunlight during the process can help limit fading, but do not expect every bloom to retain its original shade or shape.

Press flowers for a flat keepsake

Pressing is useful if you want to save individual petals or small, relatively flat flowers. Daisies and other thin blooms are easier to press than thick flower heads. You can also separate petals from a larger flower and arrange them on the page.

Place the flowers between sheets of plain absorbent paper, with space between each piece. Put the paper inside a heavy book, then add more weight on top. Protect the book with extra paper, since moisture from the flowers can mark its pages.

Leave the flowers undisturbed for a couple of weeks, then check them. If they still feel damp, replace the paper and give them more time. Once dry, lift them carefully and arrange them in a frame, album, or card.

Store your keepsake with care

Keep dried and pressed flowers in a dry room, away from direct sunlight and steamy bathrooms. Sun can fade their color, while moisture can soften them or encourage mold. A closed display frame can help protect pressed flowers from dust and handling.

For loose dried flowers, use a box if you are not displaying them. Add a note with the birthday or the name of the person who gave you the bouquet. Store the note separately from any flowers that might shed petals.

Common questions

Can you preserve the entire bouquet?

You can try air drying it, but a large, tightly bound bouquet may not dry evenly. Separate it into smaller bundles first, then put the dried stems back together.

How long will preserved flowers last?

There is no fixed lifespan. Careful handling and a dry spot out of direct sun can help, though dried flowers become fragile and may fade over time.

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