

Twelve Tips for Making Your Flowers Last Longer

1 Always ensure containers are spotlessly clean to stop bacteria multiplying. The dishwasher works well, but take care — some glass vases may be too fragile for this treatment.

2 Always remove the bottom 10% from stem ends immediately before placing in water containing cut flower food. Chrysal is the brand leader in many countries and can extend flower life by around 30% or more, enabling flowers to reach their full potential.

3 If not using cut flower food, change the water daily and remove 10% from the stem ends every other day.

4 Cut stem ends at an angle to allow a greater surface area for water uptake. Avoid too sharp an angle as the point may split or be squashed. For woody stems such as *Syringa* and *Viburnum opulus*, try a sharp upward slit to expose more tissue and ease water absorption.

5 Flowers last longer in a cooler room. Air conditioning, televisions, radiators and dishwashers all shorten flower life — keep flowers at a reasonable distance from all heat sources.

6 Avoid placing flowers and foliage on a window ledge — too much direct sun or cold are both detrimental to their longevity.

7 Flowers with latex in their stems, such as *Euphorbia* (spurge) and *Papaver* (poppy), should have their stems singed in a flame so the end is not blocked by latex and unable to take up water.

8 Flowers with thin tissue-like petals, such as *Eustoma* (lisianthus) and *Papaver* (poppy), need to drink a lot as water evaporates quickly from the petals — make sure they always have plenty.

9 If roses wilt prematurely, cut 30% from the bottom of the stem at an angle and place horizontally in tepid water for an hour. There is about a 60% chance of revival — but only if the rose is merely wilted, not at the end of its life.

10 Ripening fruit emits ethylene gas which shortens flower life, so ideally buy from a shop where fruits and flowers are kept well apart. Smoking also produces ethylene gas.

11 Remove the bottom leaves from the stem. This will reduce water evaporation and the flower will last longer.

12 With linear flowers such as *Delphinium*, *Freesia* and *Gladiolus*, which open from the bottom upwards (except *Liatis*, which opens from the tip downwards), remove spent flowers to encourage those higher up the stem to open.