

To prevent cut chrysanthemums from smelling bad, put them in a clean vase with fresh water and remove any leaves that would sit underwater. Change the water regularly, rinse the vase, and trim the stems so decaying plant material does not build up.

Start with a clean vase

A musty or sour smell often comes from dirty water rather than the flowers themselves. Even a vase that looks clean can have residue inside from an earlier arrangement. Wash it with dish soap and warm water, then rinse it thoroughly before adding fresh water.

Choose a vase that gives the stems some room. Crowding can trap leaves and make it harder to see what is happening in the water. Before arranging the flowers, take off any foliage that would fall below the waterline. Leaves left in water can decay and make the vase smell unpleasant.

Trim the bottom of each stem with clean, sharp scissors or shears. An angled cut gives you a useful surface for water uptake. Place the stems in water promptly after cutting them.

Keep the water fresh

Check the vase each day. If the water looks cloudy, or if you notice an unpleasant smell, change it and wash the vase. Even when the water looks clear, refreshing it every couple of days helps keep the arrangement tidy.

At each water change, take the opportunity to look over the stems and leaves. A little care takes only a few minutes.

- Rinse the stems to remove any slippery residue.

- Trim a small amount from the bottom of each stem.
- Remove fallen petals and any leaves from the water.
- Use flower food if it came with the flowers, following the packet directions.

Avoid guessing at amounts of household additives. Clean water and a clean vase are a straightforward starting point, and flower food is best used as directed.

Choose a cool spot and remove fading flowers

Keep the arrangement away from direct sun, heaters, and other warm spots. A cooler position can help the flowers stay fresh longer. Leave some space around the vase so you can see the water level and pick out any loose petals.

Remove flowers or leaves that have turned brown or feel soft. If one stem smells unpleasant, take it out and inspect the others. Wash the vase and replace the water before putting the remaining flowers back.

Chrysanthemums also have a natural leafy scent that some people find strong. If the flowers and water look fresh, that scent is not necessarily a sign of decay. Moving the vase to a less enclosed part of the room may make it more comfortable.

Questions about chrysanthemum smells

Why does the vase smell sour?

Decaying leaves or stems in the water may be the cause. Remove the plant debris, wash the vase, and add fresh water.

How often should I change the water?

Refresh it every couple of days, or sooner if it becomes cloudy or smells unpleasant.

Should I remove all the leaves?

No. Remove the leaves that would sit underwater, along with any that are damaged or decaying.

Can I save flowers that have started to smell?

Sometimes. Discard any soft or foul smelling stems, clean the vase, and place the healthy looking flowers in fresh water.

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