

How to Air-Dry Flowers

Air-drying flowers is a simple, fun hobby that can save you money by providing free material to make dried flower decorations for your home or to give as gifts.

It's very simple to air-dry flowers. All you need is a place to hang them out of direct light, rubber bands and either paperclips or florist wire. I have used wooden pegged coffee cup hangers and pieces of lattice attached to the kitchen wall as places to air-dry flowers. You can also insert cup hooks into a wall and use those.

Once you have a place to hang them set up, you can begin to find flowers to dry. Hopefully you have a variety of flowers growing in your yard to experiment with. If not, you can find wildflowers growing alongside roads or in forests. If you are using these flowers, be sure to take care of the plants you take the flowers from. This ensures that there is plenty of plant growth for insects, birds and other wildlife to use.

Some flowers that have air-dried well for me are: Yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*), pompon Dahlias (*Dahlia hortensis*), Poppy seed heads (*Papaver somniferum*), Roses (*Rosa*), Marjoram (*Origanum vulgare*), Delphinium, Larkspur (*Consolida ambigua*), Lavender (*Lavandula Augustifolia*), African Marigold (*Tagetes erecta*), Strawflower (*Helichrysum bracteatum*), Globe Thistle (*echinops ritro*), Cornflower (*Centaurea cyanus*), Statice (*Limonium sinuatum*), Globe amaranth (*Gomphrena globosa*), and Love-in-a-mist (*Nigella damascena*) seed heads.

To find flowers that air-dry well, it's good practice to experiment. If it doesn't dry well, you gain the knowledge not to use it next time. Sometimes, an air-dried flower that doesn't look good to one person may look pleasing to another.

With most flowers, the best stage to dry them is when they are just beginning to open. Depending on the flower, if you hang it too late, the petals will fall off. You will learn this as you experiment. Others, you will want to wait until the seed head is developed because this is the decorative part.

The best time to cut flowers for drying is late morning after the dew has dried and on a dry day. I like to take a wicker basket with a handle and my scissors with me and take a walk around the yard snipping what looks appealing.

Once you have your flowers picked, you can prepare them for air-drying. To do this, bundle eight to ten stems with a rubber band at the cut end of the flowers. The rubber band works especially well because as the flowers dry, the stems will shrink and the rubber band will shrink to the appropriate size of the bunch. Now you can insert an unraveled paper clip or florist wire inside the rubber band

and bend it to form a hook that the bunch can hang over a peg, piece of lattice or hook. Hang the bunch of flowers upside down and depending on the weather, they will probably take anywhere from one to three weeks to dry completely. You can tell they are dry completely when they feel crisp to the touch.

Air-drying flowers make a fabulous decoration by themselves, but when they are dry, you can take them down and make dried flower arrangements, Christmas ornaments, dried flower wreaths and more.