

Carnations, chrysanthemums, and orchids are among the best choices for outdoor graduation ceremonies because they generally hold up well as cut flowers. Their lasting power still depends on the heat, sun, and how long they spend without water.

Choose sturdy flowers

Carnations are a practical first choice. Their firm petals travel well, and cut stems can last for many days in water. They also come in a wide range of colors, which makes it easy to choose a bouquet that suits the occasion.

Chrysanthemums are another dependable option. Their blooms are sturdy, and many varieties have several flowers on a stem. Spray chrysanthemums can add fullness to a bouquet without making it difficult to carry.

Orchids are often used in corsages and leis. Individual blooms can look good through a ceremony, though they should be kept cool and handled gently. Alstroemeria is also a good cut flower for a bouquet, especially if its stems can stay in water until close to the event.

- **Carnations:** sturdy petals and long vase life.
- **Chrysanthemums:** firm blooms that travel well.
- **Orchids:** a useful choice for corsages and leis.
- **Alstroemeria:** long lasting cut flowers for a water fed bouquet.

Plan for sun and time without water

No cut flower is immune to a hot afternoon. Direct sun and warm air speed up water loss, so a bouquet may wilt much sooner outdoors than it would in a cool room. Wind can dry petals and foliage too.

Think about the full wait, not just the ceremony. Flowers may spend time in a car, on a chair, and in a crowd before photos begin. Keep them in a cool, shaded spot for as much of that time as possible. Do not leave them in a parked car.

For a hand tied bouquet, ask for the stems to be kept in water until pickup. Carry a small container of water if practical, and put the stems back in it during any long breaks. Keep the flowers upright so petals do not get crushed.

Match the flowers to the occasion

A small bouquet is easier to carry through a crowded venue. Choose a few sturdy blooms rather than a large arrangement that may be bumped or set down in the sun. Keep any wrapping clear of the cut stem ends so they can go back into water.

For a corsage or lei, ask how it should be stored before the event. Keep it cool and out of direct sun, then put it on as close to the ceremony as practical. Avoid squeezing the blooms while taking photos or greeting guests.

Common questions about graduation flowers

Can flowers last through a long ceremony without water?

Sturdy blooms can often manage a few hours, but heat and sun make the outcome less predictable. Keep them shaded and return stems to water as soon as you can.

Are roses a good outdoor choice?

Roses can work, especially when kept cool and hydrated. Their petals can bruise, so protect them from handling and crowding.

Should I buy flowers the day before?

You can, provided you store them properly. Put cut stems in clean water and keep the bouquet in a cool place away from direct sun.

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