

You can preserve an anniversary bouquet at home by air drying the flowers, pressing them, or drying them in silica gel. Choose a method based on the flowers you have and how you want to display them.

Prepare the flowers

Start while the bouquet still looks fresh. Flowers that are already dropping petals or turning brown are less likely to keep their shape and color. Take a few photos first if you want a record of the original arrangement.

Remove ribbons and wrapping, then gently take the bouquet apart. Set aside any flowers you want to preserve and remove leaves from the stems. If you have enough blooms, try more than one method so you can see which result you like best.

Hang flowers to dry

Air drying is a simple choice for roses, lavender, and other sturdy flowers. Gather a few stems into a small bunch and tie them together with string. Hang the bunch upside down in a dry, dark place with good air circulation, such as a cupboard that is not damp.

Leave space between bunches so air can move around them. Drying often takes two to three weeks, though the time depends on the flowers and the room. They are ready when the petals feel dry and papery. Handle them gently, since dried flowers can be brittle.

Press flowers for a flat display

Pressing works well for smaller flowers and individual petals. Place them between sheets of absorbent, unprinted paper, with space around each piece. Put the paper inside a heavy book and add more books on top.

Leave the flowers for a few weeks, checking them occasionally. Replace the paper if it feels damp. Once the flowers are completely dry, you can arrange them in a frame or add them to a scrapbook. Keep the finished piece out of direct sunlight to help slow fading.

Use silica gel for fuller shapes

Flower drying silica gel can help flowers keep more of their shape than pressing does. Choose a container with a lid and pour in a layer of the drying material. Set a flower on top, then gently cover it, making sure the material reaches between the petals without crushing them.

Follow the product instructions for drying time and handling. When the flower is dry, carefully pour away the material and use a soft brush to remove any grains. Keep silica gel away from children and pets, and do not use a container meant for food.

Questions you may have

Can you preserve the whole bouquet?

You can dry several stems and arrange them together afterward. Large, tightly bound bouquets may dry unevenly, so separating them into small bunches is safer.

Will the flowers keep their original colors?

Colors usually change as flowers dry and may fade further over time. Darkness during drying and display away from direct sun can help.

How should you store dried flowers?

Keep them in a dry place, away from moisture and direct sunlight. A covered display can also protect delicate petals from dust and accidental knocks.

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