

To make a memorial bouquet from a loved one's garden, gather a few flowers and leaves that remind you of them, then arrange the stems loosely in water. Let the garden guide the shape of the bouquet rather than trying to make every bloom match.

Choose what carries meaning

Walk through the garden before you cut anything. A favorite rose, a sprig of rosemary or a flower that grew by the door may feel more meaningful than the largest bloom. You can also include foliage for its color, shape or connection to a particular place in the garden.

Choose flowers that are in good condition, with firm stems and petals that are not yet fading. If the garden is not yours, ask permission before cutting. Take only what you need, leaving plenty for the garden and anyone else who tends it.

A small bouquet can be enough. A handful of stems gathered with care may hold as much meaning as a fuller arrangement. If there are few flowers in season, let leaves and herbs be part of the bouquet rather than treating them as an afterthought.

Gather and prepare the stems

Cut flowers in the cool of the morning if you can, and bring a container of water into the garden. Use clean, sharp snips or scissors. Place each stem in water as you work, especially if you will not be arranging it straight away.

Before you begin, gather these simple supplies:

- A clean vase or jar filled with fresh water

- Clean, sharp snips or scissors
- A selection of flowers, herbs and foliage
- Soft string or ribbon if you want to tie the stems

Remove any leaves that would sit below the waterline. Trim the ends of the stems before placing them in the vase. This also gives you a chance to adjust their lengths, though it is best to start with longer stems and cut more only as needed.

Some garden plants can irritate skin or be harmful if eaten. If you are unsure what a plant is, leave it in the garden. Keep the finished bouquet away from children and pets if it contains plants that may be unsafe for them.

Arrange and care for the bouquet

Start with a few sturdy stems, then add the flowers that matter most. Turn the vase as you work and fill gaps with smaller blooms or leaves. Allow some stems to stand a little higher or lean outward. The loose shape can echo the way they grew.

If the bouquet will be carried to a memorial, tie the stems gently with string or ribbon. Keep them in water until it is time to leave, and return them to water as soon as practical. Check the water daily, replace it when cloudy and remove flowers as they fade.

The bouquet does not need to be perfect. It can simply be a way to bring a little of a familiar garden into a moment of remembrance.

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