

Dry mature hydrangea blooms slowly in a vase with a small amount of water to preserve their shape for home decor. After they are dry, keep them away from direct sunlight and moisture, which can fade or damage them.

Select blooms at the right stage

Hydrangeas are usually ready for drying late in their flowering season, when the petals start to feel papery instead of soft. Some varieties also change color as they mature. Avoid cutting fresh, tender blooms, since they are more likely to wilt before drying.

Pick flower heads that are healthy and free of noticeable brown or damaged patches. Some fading is fine and can add character. Dried hydrangeas tend to have softer, less vivid colors than fresh flowers, and differences in tone can give an arrangement more depth.

Use clean, sharp scissors or pruners to cut the stems. Leave enough stem to suit the vase you plan to use, then strip off the leaves because they do not dry as well as the flower heads. If you are gathering flowers from your garden, cut only the number you need and leave other blooms in place to enjoy outside.

Dry the stems and arrange them

With the water method, the blooms and stems dry gradually. The process is straightforward, and you can leave the flowers in the same vase as they dry.

1. Pour a few inches of water into a clean vase. Cut the stems so the flower heads sit comfortably above the rim.
2. Stand the stems in the vase, leaving space between the flower heads. Avoid packing them together so air can circulate.

3. Place the vase somewhere cool and dry, away from direct sunlight. Leave the flowers in place as the water evaporates and the blooms dry.
4. After about two weeks, feel the petals. They are ready when they are dry and crisp. If they still feel soft, let them dry longer.

When the flowers are dry, display the stems in a vase with no water. Several large heads can make a full display in a plain container, while one bloom may suit a small shelf. Move the flowers carefully because the petals can break or fall off.

Choose a spot away from direct sun, humid areas and sources of heat. Sunlight can make the color fade, while moisture can cause dried flowers to deteriorate. Remove dust with a gentle puff of air instead of wiping the petals. Drying helps the flowers keep their shape for a while, but they remain fragile and their color will change gradually.

Common questions about drying hydrangeas

How long can dried hydrangeas last?

Indoors, dried hydrangeas may last for months or longer, but there is no set lifespan. How well they hold up depends on the blooms, the drying method and the place where you display them.

Is it possible to dry hydrangeas without water?

Yes. Hang mature stems upside down in a dry place with good airflow, away from direct sunlight. Keep the stems loosely spaced, and leave them hanging until the flower heads feel crisp.

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