

To prepare ranunculus for a spring table, trim the stems, remove leaves that would sit below the water, and let the flowers drink in a clean vase. Then arrange them loosely in fresh water, keeping their delicate heads clear of direct heat and crowded place settings.

Give the stems a fresh start

Begin with a clean vase or a small group of clean vessels. Wash them with soap and water, then rinse well. Fill each one with fresh, cool water and add flower food if you have it, following the instructions on the packet.

Unwrap the ranunculus gently and separate the stems without pulling at the flower heads. Their stems can be hollow and tender, so hold each one near the point where you plan to cut. Use clean, sharp scissors or floral snips to remove a little from the bottom at an angle.

Strip off any leaves that would fall below the waterline. Leaves left in water can decay and make the water cloudy. Keep the leaves higher on the stem if you like their soft green color, but remove any that are damaged.

Place the flowers in water as soon as you have cut them. Give them time to drink in a cool spot before arranging them. If a stem bends, try using it in a shorter vase rather than forcing it upright.

Arrange for the table

Choose a low vessel so guests can see one another across the table. Before making your final cuts, hold a few stems beside the vase to judge their height. Cut a little at a time. You can always shorten a stem, but you cannot add length back.

Start with a few ranunculus spaced around the vessel, then fill the gaps with more stems. Let the flowers face slightly different directions. Their layered petals look lovely from above, and a loose arrangement gives each bloom room to be seen.

If you want greenery or other spring flowers, add a few stems around the ranunculus rather than packing them tightly together. Leave space between the blooms and check that every cut end reaches the water. A cluster of small vases can work well on a long table and is easy to move when food is served.

Set the arrangement away from direct sun, radiators, and candles. Check the water each day, topping it up as needed. If it becomes cloudy, wash the vase, replace the water, and trim the stems again.

Questions about ranunculus

Can I arrange ranunculus the day before?

Yes. Prepare the stems and arrange them in clean water, then keep the vase in a cool place overnight. Check the water and the position of the flowers before setting the table.

What should I do with a drooping stem?

Give it a fresh cut and place it in clean water. If it still bends, use a shorter vessel to support it, or let its curve become part of the arrangement.

A good companion read: details here