

Orchids, peonies, plum blossoms and chrysanthemums are among the flowers associated with good fortune during Lunar New Year. Their meanings vary across cultures, but they are often chosen to express wishes for prosperity, happiness and a promising year ahead.

Flowers and their meanings

Flower symbolism is not the same in every family or community. Some meanings come from the season in which a plant blooms, while others are tied to its appearance or to longstanding cultural associations.

- **Orchids:** Often associated with elegance, abundance and good fortune, orchids are a popular choice for the holiday. A potted orchid can also remain on display after the celebrations.
- **Peonies:** These full, ruffled flowers are associated with prosperity and honor in Chinese culture. Pink and red peonies make a generous looking arrangement, although availability depends on the season.
- **Plum blossoms:** Plum trees can bloom while the weather is still cold. Their flowers are associated with resilience and the arrival of spring, making flowering branches a fitting decoration for the new year.
- **Chrysanthemums:** These flowers are associated with longevity in Chinese culture. Their rounded blooms come in many colors, including yellow and red.
- **Narcissus:** Often called Chinese sacred lilies, these fragrant flowers are associated with good fortune and are traditionally grown for Lunar New Year displays.
- **Peach blossoms:** Flowering peach branches are used in Lunar New Year decorations, especially in northern Vietnam, where they are associated with spring and renewal.

Choosing flowers for a gift or display

Start with flowers that are fresh and easy for the recipient to care for. A potted orchid suits someone who enjoys houseplants, while cut branches or a bouquet may be easier for a person who prefers a temporary display.

Color can also shape the message. Red is widely associated with luck and celebration in Chinese Lunar New Year traditions, so red blooms are a straightforward choice. Pink flowers can give an arrangement a softer look without losing its festive feel.

Keep the recipient's customs in mind. Flower meanings can differ, and white flowers are associated with mourning in some cultures. If you are unsure about a color or a particular flower, ask someone familiar with the recipient's traditions.

For cut flowers, use a clean vase and fresh water. Trim the stems and remove any leaves that would sit below the waterline. Keep the arrangement away from strong heat, and change the water regularly.

Questions about Lunar New Year flowers

Are orchids a good Lunar New Year gift?

Yes. Orchids are commonly given as a wish for good fortune and abundance. Choose a healthy plant with firm leaves and some unopened buds.

Do the flowers have to be red?

No. Red is a familiar festive color, but pink, yellow and other colors can also be appropriate. Consider the recipient's preferences and traditions.

Can flowering branches be used instead of a bouquet?

Yes. Plum and peach blossoms are both used in seasonal displays. Place cut branches in a sturdy vase with fresh water.

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