

Make a memorial wreath without floral foam by fastening small groups of foliage and flowers to a wire or twig ring, laying each group over the last until the base is covered. For blooms that need water, use small water tubes; otherwise, select firm stems that can last through the service without a water supply.

Select a base and collect your supplies

A wire ring is practical because you can attach bundles at many points around it. A ring made from woven twigs has a softer, more natural appearance, and its surface can show through between the flowers. Choose a ring that fits the place where the wreath will be displayed and matches the quantity of greenery and flowers available.

Set out all the materials before you start. You will need:

- A wire or woven twig wreath base
- Fresh foliage with stems that bend easily
- Flowers and any other plant material with personal meaning
- Florist wire or natural twine, with scissors or wire cutters
- Small water tubes for blooms that need added moisture

Think about the display conditions as you choose the flowers. Roses, carnations and chrysanthemums are often used for memorials, but the freshness of a stem and how long it has been out of water are more useful guides than its type alone. A florist can advise which flowers are likely to stay in good condition for the time you have planned.

Prepare stems and assemble the wreath

Trim the flower and foliage stems to lengths that are easy to handle. Make small bunches containing several foliage pieces and one or two flowers. Aim for a similar size across the bunches, but do not make them perfectly uniform; slight differences help the finished ring look relaxed.

Set the first bunch against the ring, pointing its stems along the curve. Wind wire or twine around both the stems and the base until it holds firmly. Place the next bunch on top so its leaves conceal the tied section beneath, then fasten that bunch as well.

Work in one direction around the entire ring, covering each fastening with the next bunch. At the end, slide the last stems under the first bunch and tie them down with care so the flowers are not squashed. Gently lift the wreath to find any loose pieces. If it needs to hang, attach a strong loop of wire or twine to its back.

Help the flowers stay fresh

Make the wreath as near to the memorial service as you reasonably can. Before it is needed, place it somewhere cool, away from sunny windows and heaters. Pick it up by the frame, not by the flower heads, to avoid damaging the arrangement.

For a delicate bloom, fill a small water tube, put its cap in place and pass the stem through the opening. Fasten the tube to the frame, then conceal it among the foliage. Make sure it is shut and angled so water cannot leak out. Since most stems in the completed wreath will have no water source, keep the arrangement cool.

Memorial wreath questions

Can garden flowers go in a wreath?

Yes. Choose healthy, firm blooms, cut their stems and stand them in water before arranging them. Do not use plants that can irritate the skin or are unsuitable for the place where the wreath will be displayed.

How should I handle the wreath after the service?

Take the flowers and greenery off the frame. Compost plant material that is suitable, if local facilities accept it, and keep the frame for a future arrangement. Take out any wire and water tubes before putting plant material in the compost.

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