Flower food recipe card

Two extension recipes, worked out for common vase sizes. Iowa State Extension advises a commercial flower food packet over any home mix, and says home mixes (bleach, lemon juice, sugar, lemon-lime soda) do not work as well and may shorten vase life.

WSU Extension recipe (credited to a California extension)

2 tablespoons lemon juice, 1 tablespoon sugar and one-fourth teaspoon bleach in a quart of lukewarm water, with another one-fourth teaspoon of bleach added to the vase every 4 days.

Water	Lemon juice	Sugar	Household bleach
2 cups	1 tbsp	1 1/2 tsp	1/8 tsp
1 quart	2 tbsp	1 tbsp	1/4 tsp
2 quarts	4 tbsp	2 tbsp	1/2 tsp
1 gallon	8 tbsp	4 tbsp	1 tsp

Purdue Extension recipe

2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice, 1 tablespoon sugar and 1/2 teaspoon household chlorine bleach, mixed with 1 quart of water.

Water	Lemon juice	Sugar	Household bleach
2 cups	1 tbsp	1 1/2 tsp	1/4 tsp
1 quart	2 tbsp	1 tbsp	1/2 tsp
2 quarts	4 tbsp	2 tbsp	1 tsp
1 gallon	8 tbsp	4 tbsp	2 tsp

Changing the water

- Consider replacing the water every 2 to 3 days, re-cutting the stems each time; cloudy water means bacteria. (University of Illinois Extension: Care of fresh cut flowers)
- Check the water level every day. Change it completely if it turns cloudy or smells. (Iowa State University Extension: How to care for cut flowers)
- Make fresh solution when it starts to look cloudy. (Purdue Extension HO-158-W: Cut flower care)
- Add another 1/4 teaspoon of bleach to the vase every 4 days. (Washington State University Extension: Displaying and Using Fresh Cut Flowers)

> Bleach is a household chemical. Use only the tiny amounts listed, never mix bleach with ammonia or vinegar-based cleaners, label the jar, and keep it away from children and pets. Making the mix is optional: a commercial flower food packet is made for this.

Last checked 2026-11-25. Facts come from the sources below; where sources disagree the chart says so.

Sources

- Purdue Extension HO-158-W: Cut flower care — https://ag.purdue.edu/department/hla/extension/extension-publications-library/ext-pubs/ho-158-w.html (checked 2026-11-25)
- Washington State University Extension: Displaying and Using Fresh Cut Flowers — https://wpcdn.web.wsu.edu/extension/uploads/sites/57/2014/03/08-14-05-Displaying-and-Using-Fresh-Cut-Flowers.pdf (checked 2026-11-25)
- University of Illinois Extension: Care of fresh cut flowers — https://extension.illinois.edu/news-releases/care-fresh-cut-flowers (checked 2026-11-25)
- Iowa State University Extension: How to care for cut flowers — https://yardandgarden.extension.iastate.edu/how-to/how-care-cut-flowers (checked 2026-11-25)

LINK TO THIS CHART
https://aberdeenflorist.com/downloads/#flower-food-recipe-card
Live version with the same data: **https://aberdeenflorist.com/tools/homemade-flower-food/**

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