

Florists handle thorns and sharp tools by protecting their hands, keeping their workspace clear, and cutting with care. You can use the same habits at home to make flower arranging safer and more comfortable.

Protect your hands and workspace

Start with a clean, stable surface and enough room to lay out your stems. Good light helps you see thorns, damaged leaves, and the position of your fingers before you make a cut.

Wear sturdy gardening gloves when handling thorny stems. Gloves offer some protection, but thorns can still push through them, so grip gently and pay attention to where your hands are. For delicate work, you may need to remove your gloves, but keep your fingers away from the blade and any sharp points.

Keep children and pets away from the work area. Put a container nearby for thorny trimmings so they do not end up loose on the table or floor.

Prepare thorny stems with care

Roses are a familiar example, but other stems can also have sharp growth. Look over each stem before handling it, and remove only what you need to make the arrangement safe to hold and place in water.

1. Set the stem on a stable surface and identify the thorns you need to remove.
2. Hold the stem securely, keeping your fingers behind the tool and clear of the cutting edge.
3. Use a suitable stem stripper or florist snips to remove thorns carefully. Follow the tool instructions and avoid pulling forcefully.
4. Place removed thorns and leaves straight into the waste container.

5. Check the stem by sight before placing it in the arrangement. Do not slide an unprotected hand along it.

Take your time around the base of each thorn. Cutting too deeply into a stem can damage it, so use a light touch rather than scraping away more than necessary.

Use and store tools safely

Choose snips or pruners suited to the thickness of the stem. Sharp, well maintained blades generally need less force to make a clean cut. Cut away from your body, and keep your other hand clear of the blades.

Put a tool down before reaching for another stem. Do not leave open snips hidden under foliage or near the edge of a table. Close them between uses and store them securely when you finish.

Clean tools after use to remove plant residue. If you disinfect them, follow the product label and dry the blades before storage. Check handles, hinges, and locks regularly, and stop using a tool if it is damaged.

Common questions

Should you remove every thorn from a rose?

Not necessarily. Remove thorns where they could catch your hands or interfere with arranging, while avoiding unnecessary damage to the stem.

What should you do if a thorn punctures your skin?

Wash the area with soap and running water. Seek medical advice if you cannot remove the thorn, the wound is deep, or you notice signs of infection such as increasing redness, swelling, or pain.

Read next: online gift ordering guide