

Sunflowers, zinnias, carnations, and chrysanthemums work well for a pool party because they make colorful, sturdy arrangements. Choose flowers suited to the heat, give them fresh water, and keep them away from the pool edge.

Choose flowers that can handle the setting

Sunflowers bring a clear, bright look to an outdoor table. Their heavy heads need a stable container and enough room between stems, so they are often best in a few larger arrangements rather than narrow vases.

Zinnias offer a range of colors and have firm stems that are easy to arrange. Carnations and chrysanthemums are useful choices for filling out a display, and both can hold up well as cut flowers with regular care. Pick blooms that look fresh, with firm petals and clean stems.

For a softer tropical look, try orchids in a shaded spot. Their flowers can last well, but they are better protected from harsh direct sun and strong wind. A potted orchid can also make a table look finished without much arranging.

Keep arrangements cool and watered

Even sturdy flowers wilt faster in heat. Put arrangements under an umbrella, on a covered table, or in another place that gets some shade during the party. Keep them away from hot surfaces, grills, and vents that blow warm air.

Fill containers with clean water before guests arrive. Trim the stems with clean scissors or shears, and remove leaves that would sit below the waterline. Check the water during a long gathering and top it up as needed. For a

party that runs into the evening, keep spare flowers indoors until they are needed.

Pick containers that stay put

Outdoor tables can be crowded, and a gust of wind can easily knock over a tall arrangement. Use low, wide containers with a solid base. Keep the flowers low enough that guests can see and talk over them.

Avoid glass beside the pool, where a broken container would be difficult to clean up safely. Plastic or other nonbreakable containers are more practical near wet feet and busy walkways. Set each arrangement back from the edge of the table so it is less likely to be bumped.

Keep flowers out of the pool

Place flowers on tables or in sheltered corners rather than floating loose blooms in the water. Petals and leaves can collect in skimmers and filters, and wet plant material on the deck can become slippery. A splash may also damage an arrangement or wash debris into the pool.

If children or pets will be nearby, check that every flower and foliage choice is appropriate for them before setting it out. Keep arrangements where they cannot be pulled down or eaten, and clear away dropped petals and stems promptly.

A few well placed containers are usually enough to bring color to the party. Give them shade, clean water, and a stable spot, then let the setting do the rest.

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