

To seal a porous ceramic flower vase, clean and dry it, then coat the inside with a sealant labeled for ceramic and continuous contact with water. Let the coating cure fully and test the vase for leaks before using it for flowers.

Choose a suitable sealant

Look for a clear waterproof coating that the maker specifically recommends for ceramic and for holding water. Some ceramic sealers are intended to resist splashes or stains, not to contain standing water for days. Read the label before buying, and follow its directions for application and curing.

Check where the coating can be used. A product made for outdoor masonry, for example, may not be intended for the inside of a vase. If the label does not answer your questions, ask the manufacturer rather than guessing.

If the vase is valuable, handmade, or has an unusual glaze, consider using a removable liner instead. A narrow glass jar or waterproof container that fits inside can hold the water without altering the ceramic. Make sure the liner sits steadily and does not protrude above the rim.

Clean and dry the vase

Wash the vase with mild dish soap and warm water. Use a soft bottle brush to loosen dirt inside, then rinse thoroughly. Avoid scraping delicate surfaces or forcing a brush through a narrow neck.

Leave the vase somewhere airy until it is completely dry. Porous ceramic can hold moisture below the surface, so it may need more time than the outside suggests. Check the sealant instructions for any specific drying requirements.

Protect your work surface and provide ventilation as directed on the product label. Gather what you need before opening the sealant:

- A clean, dry vase
- A waterproof coating suitable for ceramic
- An applicator recommended on the label
- Gloves and any other protection specified by the manufacturer
- A tray for the leak test

Apply the coating and test it

Follow the product instructions for stirring and application. Coat the interior as evenly as the directions allow, paying attention to the base and the join between the base and walls. A narrow brush may help you reach inside, provided it is suitable for the product.

Apply additional coats only if the label calls for them. Allow the recommended time between coats, then leave the vase undisturbed for the full curing period. Dry to the touch does not necessarily mean ready to hold water.

Place the cured vase on a dry tray, fill it with water, and check it periodically for damp patches. If water seeps through, empty and dry the vase. Consult the coating instructions before applying more, or use a separate liner.

Common questions

Can I seal only the outside?

An interior coating is the more direct way to keep water from entering porous ceramic. Follow the chosen product's instructions rather than assuming an exterior coat will hold water.

Can I use the vase for drinking water afterward?

Not unless the coating is explicitly rated for that use. A vase sealant is not automatically suitable for contact with drinking water.

What if the vase is cracked?

A coating may not reliably repair a crack. Use a waterproof liner, or ask a ceramics conservator about a suitable repair.

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