

Carnation

BOTANICAL NAME

Dianthus caryophyllus
(dy-AN-thus ka-ree-AHF-i-lus)

COMMON NAMES

Carnation, Clove pink, Gilliflower, Pink

DESCRIPTION

Standard carnations' textural blossoms grow up to 3 inches in diameter. These versatile flowers develop on strong, straight stems. Most cultivars have a mildly spicy aroma.

COLORS

Carnations are available in many colors including hues of white, pink, red, salmon, orange, yellow, green and violet as well as bicolors.

VASE LIFE

Carnations will last from seven to 21 days, depending on variety and care and handling they receive.

varieties

Hundreds of varieties are available.

availability

Carnations are available year-round.

vase-life extenders

REFRIGERATION Store these flowers in a floral cooler at 33 F to 35 F and at a humidity level between 90 percent to 95 percent. Open flowers can be stored for two to four weeks, and bud-harvested flowers can be stored for up to four to five weeks.

WATER Check water level daily, and add warm flower-food solution as needed. It is beneficial to recut stems every three to four days to ensure effective water uptake.

ETHYLENE SENSITIVITY Carnations are extremely sensitive to ethylene gas,



D. CARYOPHYLLUS
'TASMAN'



D. CARYOPHYLLUS
'NELSON'

quality checklist

BLOOMS Harvested flowers are graded by size and stem length. Watch for split calyces, caused by sudden changes in growing conditions.

of note

CONSUMER CARE TIPS Advise customers to display these blossoms in a cool location, out of direct sunlight and away from heat sources. If possible, the blossoms should be put in the coldest room of the house at night and misted for longer enjoyment.

CAUTION Ingestion can cause minor illness, and frequent handling can cause dermatitis.

which causes petal wilting. Be sure your flowers have been treated at the grower level or during transportation with an anti-ethylene product.



DIANTHUS CARYOPHYLLUS
'MOONDUST™' AND 'MOONSHADOW™'
Image courtesy of Florigene Ltd.

fun facts

MEANING The name "carnation" is from the Latin "carnis," meaning "flesh," alluding to the pale pink color of some varieties. In Greek, "dianthus" means "flower of Jove."

FAMILY Carnations are members of the Caryophyllaceae (pink) family. Close relatives include baby's-breath (*Gypsophila*), *Lychnis* and *Silene* (campion and catchfly).

ORIGINS Carnations are native to cool, mountainous regions from southern Europe to India.

HISTORY Carnations are said to have sprung up from Mary's tears as she made her way to Calvary. The pink carnation is the symbol of mother's love and of Mother's Day. Carnations are one of the first mentioned flowers in history and were used in garlands by the Greeks and Romans.

GROWING REGIONS The U.S. carnation industry started on Long Island, N.Y., in 1852, with imported French carnations, and was then centered in the Northeast. Today, the largest growing areas of carnations are in Colombia.

Some information provided by:
The Chain of Life Network®,
www.chainoflifenet.org
The Society of American Florists'
Flower & Plant Care manual
The British National Carnation Society,
<http://carnations.org.uk>

Reach "Cut Flower of the Month" writer Steven W. Brown, AIFD, at sbfloral@aol.com or (415) 239-3140.

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