

CARNATIONS

MAGICAL PROPERTIES, USES, AND HOW TO GROW & CARE FOR THEM

Carnations are lovely, easy to grow magical plants. Ideal for beginner gardeners or readily available to buy as cut flowers from the florist or supermarket. They are often scented, especially the varieties known as 'Pinks'.

Magically, they are used mainly in healing, protection or cleansing work. The dried flowers can be added to healing oils and bath salts, or added to smudge sticks and incense recipes.

Freshly cut carnations last well in a vase and, due to the variety of colours available, they make great altar flowers. You can choose your colour depending on the work you wish to do. For example, red flowers of any kind represent strength, and carnations in general also bring an element of strength to your ritual. So choosing a red coloured carnation would bring double the amount of strength to your spell work.



CARNATION OVERVIEW:

Name: Carnation (*Dianthus carophyllus*)

Common names: Pinks, Gillies, Gilliflower, Jove's Flower, Nelka, Scaffold Flower, Sops-in-Wine

Gender: Male

Planet: Sun

Element: Fire

Deity: Jupiter

Medicinal uses: Stress and anxiety, aphrodisiac, hair loss, relaxant

Magical uses: Protection, strength, healing, cleansing

Parts used: Flowers and sometimes leaves

Fragrance: Floral - relaxing, romantic, overall feeling of happiness

Warnings: May cause skin irritation. May cause digestive upset if taken internally.

Do not use in children, during pregnancy or while nursing.



HOW TO GROW CARNATIONS

Carnations are super easy to grow and care for. They are hardy plants that can cope well with frost and heat. They grow in most types of soils (as long as they are not too acid or alkaline) and like a sunny position if possible. They also grow really well in baskets and containers, and some supermarket bought varieties are really well suited to growing in the house. The only thing they do not like is to have their roots sat in water, so a free draining soil is essential.

If growing directly into garden soil, no watering or feeding is necessary. Container grown plants will need watering only when they start to feel dry. They will also benefit from a regular liquid tomato feed during the growing season. Removing any faded flowers (deadheading) on a regular basis will encourage more flowers to appear.



HOW TO GROW CARNATIONS

You can very easily increase your stock of carnations by propagating your own new plants.

- Remove a 6cm, non-flowering shoot just above a node (the line where the leaves meet the stem). Trim this shoot up to just below the lowest node.
- Remove the lower leaves and push the shoot into a pot of compost. It's ok to add a few to a pot.
- Cover with a plastic bag to maintain humidity and place in a bright area, but away from direct sunlight.
- After around 4-6 weeks your cuttings should have grown roots and you can pot your new plants up individually.

You can even use this method to take cuttings from supermarket/florist bunches of flowers!



HARVESTING & DRYING CARNATIONS

Carnations can be harvested at any time of year that there are flowers. Many varieties have long seasons of flowering - the most common border varieties typically flower all summer and into fall.

- Cut the flowers on a dry day and tie them loosely into small bunches. The more air that can circulate around each flower the better they will dry.
- Hang the bundles upside down in a dark, well ventilated room (an airing cupboard is perfect) and leave them undisturbed until completely dry.
- The important factor here is for there to be no moisture on the flowers as this will cause rot.

Please note: The air drying method mentioned above may result in a slight loss of colour. An alternative is to dry the flowers singly in the microwave, this method can be very time consuming but will ensure the original colour is maintained.

