



## GARDENING MAINTANCE TIPS FOR PLANTING & GROWING CARNATIONS

Planting and growing carnations in your Southern California garden can be a rewarding experience, as these flowers bring beautiful color and fragrance. Here are some care and maintenance tips to help your carnations thrive:

- 1. Choosing the Right Time:** In Southern California, the best time to plant carnation seeds or seedlings is in the early spring or fall when the temperatures are milder.
- 2. Selecting the Right Spot:** Carnations need full sun, so choose a location that receives at least 6 hours of direct sunlight daily.
- 3. Soil Preparation:** Carnations prefer well-draining, slightly alkaline soil with a pH between 6.5 and 7.5. Amend your garden soil with compost or sand if it's too heavy or acidic.
- 4. Planting:** For seeds, sow them about 1/8 inch deep and lightly cover with soil. For seedlings, plant them 12-18 inches apart to allow for proper air circulation and growth.
- 5. Watering:** Water your carnations deeply but infrequently, allowing the soil to dry out slightly between waterings. Overwatering can lead to root rot.
- 6. Fertilizing:** Apply a balanced, slow-release fertilizer in early spring. During the growing season, you can also use a liquid fertilizer every 4-6 weeks to encourage blooming.
- 7. Deadheading:** Regularly remove spent flowers to encourage more blooms and extend the flowering season.
- 8. Pruning:** After the blooming season, cut back the stems to about one-third of their height to promote bushy growth and prepare for the next blooming cycle.
- 9. Pest and Disease Control:** Keep an eye out for pests like aphids and spider mites. Treat infestations with insecticidal soap or neem oil. Prevent fungal diseases by ensuring good air circulation and avoiding wetting the foliage.
- 10. Mulching:** Apply a layer of mulch around the base of your carnations to help retain soil moisture, suppress weeds, and keep the roots cool in the Southern California heat.
- 11. Winter Care:** Although Southern California winters are mild, it's a good idea to mulch around the base of your carnations to protect them from any unexpected cold snaps.

By following these tips, your carnations will be well on their way to providing beautiful blooms and fragrance in your Southern California garden.