

### Cultural Details: **Carnation**

Moles Seeds offers a number of varieties for pot plant culture, also annual and perennial types for borders and cutting.

Carnations are relatively straightforward to grow, although enough time must be allowed for the flowers to develop.

### **Variety Selection**

As a 10cm pot item, the Lillipot and Mini-Spice F1 hybrids are well-known, and available in several colours. These have been joined by the slightly taller Can Can Scarlet, with vivid coloured blooms, ideal as a container plant.

For bedding plant use, the annual varieties *Enfant de Nice* and *Dwarf Fragrance* are popular choices, and the perennial *Dwarf Vienna* is a good choice for perennial sales, all are generally sold as green plants with a colour label.

Three taller varieties for Summer cut flowers and border use, two annual (*Giant Chabaud* and *Floristan*) and one perennial (*Iron Stem Hardy Border*), complete the line-up.

### **Programming the Crop**

Sow pot varieties in early January, for flowering in June, February for July, March for August, April for September. Sow the annual types in January or February, for green plant sales in May and June. The perennials are sown in June or July, for green plant sales in the Autumn or following Spring.

### **Propagation and Growing-on**

Sow the seeds (500 per gram) onto the surface of a free-draining, open, seed sowing compost, which should be thoroughly wetted with a suitable fungicide prior to sowing (to prevent damping-off diseases), and the trays allowed to drain. Cover the trays with a layer of vermiculite, and cover trays with clear or milky polythene to maintain humidity, until the first seedlings are visible. Germination takes around 7-10 days at 15-20°C. Keep the germinating seedlings moist at all times.

After around 5 weeks the plants should be ready for transfer into their final pot, either a 6-pack for bedding sales, or 9cm pot for other uses. For pot sales three plants can be planted in a larger 14cm half pot, make sure they are of similar size initially. Grow on at 10-15 °C maximum, to avoid the plants stretching, and promote branching. Do not overwater as carnations are susceptible to damping-off. Perennial types can be

overwintered without heat, preferably under well-ventilated cover, and kept on the dry side.

### **Growth Regulators**

Growth regulators can be used (according to the manufacturers' guidelines) on Carnations, especially the hybrid pot types, to ensure a compact habit.

### **Pest and Disease**

Maintain good air movement through the crop, and water in the morning rather than the evening to keep the foliage dry and lessen attack by Botrytis. It is essential to pay attention to glasshouse hygiene when growing Carnations (or any crop for that matter), using only fresh trays, pots, compost, water and clean bench tops to avoid encouraging damping-off diseases. Fusarium Wilt can affect Carnations - destroy any affected plants. Powdery Mildew could affect the crop – check for white patches on leaves. Monitor for orange brown spots on the foliage which would indicate the presence of Rust, and spray accordingly.

Check for signs of pests such as thrips, aphids and Spider Mite, spraying accordingly. Do not over-water the crop.

*Information provided for guidance only, as cultural practices and climatic circumstances vary.*