



A Love Affair with Carnations

By Jane Guerin of Jane Guerin, *flowers* www.janeguerinflowers.com

I have fallen in love with carnations! This love affair “blossomed” about a year ago when I took a floral design class by Nicolette Owen of New York City’s Nicolette Camille Floral Designs. She had gathered the most glorious flowers, one of them being a “Putumayo” carnation, which is the color of “Café au Lait” dahlias or antique lace as someone described it. Since this class, I’ve been searching and learning about all of the new varieties of carnations, and I’ve become aware that many of the most well-known floral designers in the country are designing with carnations. I just completed another class at FlowerSchool New York with famed designer Ariella Chezar, and we used a carnation called “Antiqua” in our bouquets. I’ve used it before, and it is awesome!

The carnation was given the name Dianthus, over 2000 years ago. Dianthus is the combination of the Greek words for divine, “dios” and flower, “anthos”. The carnation was a highly sought after flower throughout the centuries for its delicate clove scent and frilly petals. In the 15th and 16th centuries, it was traditional for the bride and groom to each hold a carnation at their marriage as a symbol of betrothal, which makes the carnation a natural choice for a wedding flower.

Carnations fell out of favor after many, many years of over production, and breeding that eliminated their scent. However, carnations have made a comeback, and we can now get very fragrant clove-scented carnations in beautiful and unique colors. These fragrant, beautiful varieties have taken the floral industry by storm, and it’s no wonder. They are just gorgeous!

Another great thing about carnations happens to be the price. They are less expensive than many of the typical wedding bouquet flowers, but they can certainly hold their own against these more expensive flowers. In this tentative economy, I am seeing many brides working with a relatively small budget. I am suggesting that they consider carnations, become familiar with the various varieties, and be sure to engage a floral designer who is artistic, creative, and has a great sense of color and style. It is said that there are no ugly flowers, just unattractive applications of flowers. In my shop, you will see carnations with nary a wisp of baby’s breath. (I do love massed baby’s breath, but that is another article.)

Welcome back, Dianthus! We’ve missed you!

