

G & K Carnations

Autumn Newsletter

The Harrogate Autumn Show will be our last show of the year and its the time of the year when the cooler and darker nights are starting to creep in, we are already planning for next year, application forms for shows are being completed and we have started the process of taking cuttings.

With this being our third year we have learned so much in such a short time and we have introduced new practices to improve our stand and our plants.

This year for instance we will have some early cuttings rooted in 7cm pots by the end of September and this means we will have many new cultivars ready for dispatch and if you want to get an early start then we would suggest ordering these early cuttings as they will be limited.



We have had a very good year with our stands, winning Gold at every show venue that we attended at including our first RHS Gold at RHS Cardiff and we are thrilled at winning such.



We will have this year some stunning new varieties, **Alicia** is a an absolutely beautiful Perpetual Carnation which is a white ground Picotee type with a purple wire edge and purple ticks.

This will be one of our early plants for sale.



Borja is a very stunning red/orange self Perpetual Carnation, it looks very striking.

This will be one of our early plants for sale.



Capricho is a light green self, green is a colour which is becoming very popular and we are looking at having a range of greens.

This will be one of our early plants for sale.



We will also have several new varieties for release in the New Year, **Laura Jane West** is an extremely good green self Perpetual Carnation which is also blessed with a very nice scent, this cultivar was raised by the late Gordon Dowson.



We will also have a limited few of our own new seedling which is yet to be named, this is a very striking Perpetual that has a lighter colour on the back of the petal which gives the appearance of a two tone bloom.



All of our Carnations are frost hardy, the Perpetual and Spray Carnations have not in the past had any detrimental effect by the colder weather that we get here in Durham, in fact they always seem to look better for it.

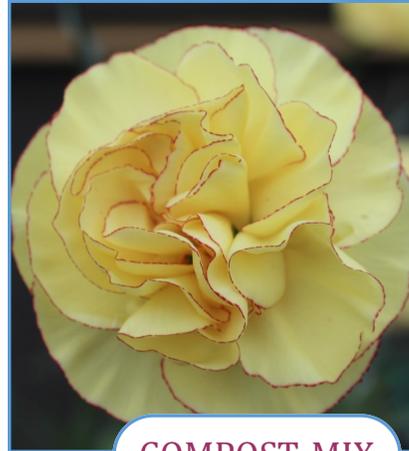
Carnations are light orientated and although they need heat to bloom without good light levels they would become drawn and straggly, they would certainly struggle here if we were to just use heat as light levels are very low here during the long winter months. With not using heat we find that this gives the plants shorter intervals between the nodes which makes for a much stockier plant.

We like to have our Perpetual Carnations plants potted up into 5" pots and stopped by the end of December, which will give us early flowering blooms, this is only done once the cutting has filled the 7cm pot with good root.

Final potting is only carried out once the 5" pot is full of root.

Keep looking at our website for any news of new varieties at:-

gandkcarnations.com



COMPOST MIX

We are constantly asked about our final compost mix, below is a guide

Nowadays there is a huge selection of composts that can be purchased at Garden Centres or DIY stores, it is always best to look at the bags that are for sale to make sure at least the compost is relatively fresh, faded colours or bags left outside in all of the elements should be avoided as should any that are not covered in some form of wrap to protect them. For a final mix you should be looking for a compost that is well drained and yet retains moisture, it is also very important that the ph is around 6.5 which will allow the plant to take up all its nutrients. We mix John Innes No 3 with a multi compost 50/50 and add perlite for drainage, lime to raise the ph and Vitax Q4 for the feed. Remember once they are in pots they are dependent on you to look after them.

We will of course also have Border Carnations, these are the true Aristocrats of the Carnations, they are said to be the true original Carnation *Dianthus Caryophyllus*. They are very easy to grow and are totally frost hardy. Unlike Spray and Perpetual Carnations Border Carnations are not stopped, the main stem is left to flower. They can be grown in the garden and will grow happily with other plants that require the same conditions, well-drained soil which is Alkaline or neutral and full sun.

We grow all our Border Carnations in pots, no smaller than a two-litre pot of which we fill with a soil-based compost mix with added grit. They are only fed once the flowering stem spindles up to flower and then we use a seaweed-based feed such as Maxicrop. We use a cane inserted into the pot so that we can attach the stem via twist ties to keep the stem straight. We keep our pots under cover just to protect the flower from any adverse weather.

We are now starting to cross breed Borders and hope to have some new introductions in the coming years, one aspect we are trying for is scent as Border Carnations that are scented are of a strong clove scent.



The Border Carnation Braeside Boy above, still one of the best heliotrope Carnation.

There are so many varied and different Border Carnations, some such as Belle of Bookham below which was raised by James Douglas nearly 80 years ago and still has the perfect blooms, they are always commented on by the public at shows and are always believed to be false silk or tissue flowers.





NEW CATALOGUE

Keep an eye on our website for the new catalogue which will have more new Carnations for next year.

Gill and I wish you all the very best for the New Year, we would love to see you at any of the shows and will try and answer any questions on how to grow these beautiful flowers.