

Winter Heather



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The scientific name *Erica* is said to be derived from the Greek word *ereiken* which translates to 'to break', referring to the late winter/early spring flowers breaking the grip that the cold seasons bring.



Erica carnea

- **Use:** Enjoy this beauty indoors in a cool, but sunny room or on a shaded entrance or porch during winter. The late winter to early spring blooms bring a pop of bright color when your home, entrance, or yard needs it most, and the needle-like foliage sports shades of green the rest of the year. It can be a challenge to grow in Southern summers, but even as a winter annual can provide lots of joy.
- **Exposure/Soil:** Morning sun and afternoon shade Plants prefer cool summer temperatures, so they are a challenge in the south. Some afternoon shade would be beneficial. Prefers sandy, acidic, well-drained soil. It will tolerate alkaline soil, however the overall health of the plant will be affected. It may be necessary to plant in raised beds to achieve adequate drainage. **Avoid clay soils.** If no alternative is available, improve the soil by adding peat or a coarse grit. Generally prefers poor soils so little fertilizer needed.
- **Growth:** Compact, clump forming 6 to 12 in. tall, 6 to 18 in. wide.
- **Hardiness:** Zones 7a-9b; Perennial
- **Foliage:** Evergreen. Leaves are in whorls of 3 or 4, at 90 degrees to stem.
- **Flower:** The small, drooping, urn-shaped flowers of winter heath typically come in shades of red, pink, purple, and white. As the clusters of tiny blooms mature, their color sometimes deepens. Winter heath can remain in bloom for several months. Some cultivars appear in December and might still bloom in April or even early May if temperatures and conditions are right. Prune lightly after flowering.

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