

Sapphire

In the Middle Ages the stone they called sapphire is now known as lapis lazuli. Years later the distinction was made. Sapphire was said to attract wealth, which is a good thing because the most beautiful are fairly pricey! Sapphire was also thought to help the wearer to focus, feel cheerful, and maintain serenity. The ancients actually believed it was magical in its ability to guard love from threats. I have been told that people today attracted to sapphire want honesty and open communication.

Sapphire, along with ruby, is part of the Corundum Species. It has a Moh's hardness of 9, second in the gem world only to diamonds. It is a dense stone; sapphire has a density of 3.95 – 4.03. I remember the first time I realized this. I was new in the trade, and was weighing loose color stones, and thought the 1 carat sapphire was so small compared to the other stones I was weighing. Its density is at the top of the normal range. Sapphire has a refractive index of 1.762 – 1.788.

Sapphire is usually found in limestone host rocks, and is much more common than it's sister gem ruby. This is partly because it's colored by iron and titanium, which are more common than ruby's coloring agent chrome. The most important mines today are Australia, Myanmar/Burma, Sri Lanka, and Thailand. The most desired stones come from Kashmir (India) and then Ceylon.

I am so glad that others colors of sapphire have gained so much popularity in recent years. Here are a few, and their coloring agents. Remember, for it to be called ruby, it needs to be red, all other colors are called sapphire, and then qualified with their hue.

Violet Sapphire- vanadium
Yellow and Green Sapphire- low iron content
Pink Sapphire-chromium
Orange Sapphire-Iron and vanadium

Yellow/ Orange Sapphire- called Padparadscha Sapphire-.