

Growing Fuchsias

FUCHSIA CULTURE: Fuchsias prefer cool, moist growing conditions in partial shade. They need protection from hot afternoon sun and shelter from strong wind. Grow them in a loose rich soil; water frequently and feed on a regular weekly schedule during the growing season. They may be displayed as hanging baskets (trailing varieties) in planter boxes (upright) or in your yard (hardy types).

POTTING: Fuchsias prefer a soil that is loose, rich, and allows easy root penetration. Most quality potting soils purchased will meet these requirements. Ensure that your pot or planter has adequate drainage as the plants do not like wet feet. Fill the planter with moist soil to within about one inch of the rim.

PINCHING & DEADHEADING: Pinching is pruning of new growth to control the shape of the plant. It will increase the number of branches to create a fuller plant and more blooms. After two or three sets of leaves and a growing tip have developed on a branch, pinch out the new tip. Repeat once or twice more as needed to develop a bushy structure. Removing spent blooms before they set seed will help to ensure that your fuchsia continues producing beautiful blossoms all summer long.

FERTILIZING: Fuchsias are heavy feeders and should be fed with a well balanced fertilizer. Apply at weekly during the growing season. Never fertilize a dry plant! Water before feeding if necessary.

WATERING: Keep your fuchsia soil moist, but not soggy, at all times. Do not overwater, especially with new plantings. During the two week establishment period for new plants, water lightly and do not let them dry out. Adjust your watering as conditions warrant.

PESTS: Aphids, spider mites, and white fly can be controlled by spraying with an insecticidal soap. **READ THE LABEL BEFORE USING ANY CHEMICAL PRODUCT.**

WINTER CARE: Fuchsias must be kept moist and sheltered from freezing over Winter. Prune branches back to the edge of the pot after the first light frost. Then store in any where that is protected from the weather and cold, ideally 40 to 50°F. Water lightly every three weeks or so during the winter to keep the plant alive. Around March, water the plants deeply and set them in a warm place to induce growth. As the new growth appears, start pinching, watering and feeding.

HARDY FUCHSIAS: Many varieties will take full sun. Regular feeding and summer water are necessary for the best results. In winter after the first frost, you may want to mulch your plants two to three inches deep. The plants may be pruned back when they are dormant, as far down as six to ten inches. In February/March, don't forget to pull back the mulch. Hardy fuchsias differ in hardiness and sun requirements.

