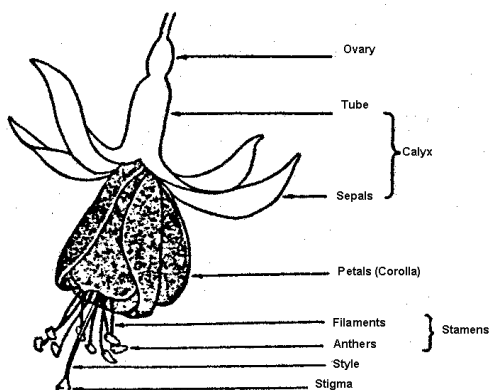


FUCHSIAS

HUMBER NURSERIES 'GREEN THUMB GUIDE'



FUCHSIAS are tropical plants that make delightful hanging baskets and good houseplants. They should be kept indoors in winter, but can be placed outside for the summer, after the danger of frost is passed, usually the first week of June. In fall, they can be cut back, potted and brought back indoors.

PLANTING

Fuchsias need a rich soil with excellent drainage and a neutral to acid pH. We recommend a mixture of 50% Cattle Manure and 50% existing garden soil for outdoor planting. When indoors, fuchsias should be planted in containers with Humber Potting Soil or Pro-Mix.

Even a light frost will damage new growth and a heavy frost can kill the entire plant. Fuchsias thrive in a cool moist area away from hot winds. They need strong indirect light and do best in an eastern or northern exposure.

After planting, water with a solution of transplant fertilizer to minimize transplant shock and promote a healthy, vigorous root system. Repeat feeding with Plant Starter at 2-week intervals for 3 to 4 applications. An 8 cm top layer of Bark Mulch around the base of the plant will help retain moisture. In frost areas, container plants should be moved in late fall to sheltered areas. In November, prune plants back and reduce watering and feeding. This dormant period will produce more vigorous plants with fuller blooms next spring.

PRUNING

The two most important steps in creating a beautiful fuchsia are pruning and pinching. Prune out an approximate volume equal to the volume of growth from last summer leaving two healthy leaf buds on each branch. If plants become leggy, pinch out the tips of the branches to force growth into the side branches and make the fuchsia bushier. Always pinch off old flowers after they fade. Never allow berries to form as this reduces flower production. If you prune in November and pinch until February or March, your fuchsias will be spectacular by mid spring and stay that way through next November.

PEST CONTROL

Spider Mites and White Flies can be a problem causing yellow leaves and leaf drop. Spray every 10 - 12 days with an insecticide to get such problems under control.

FUCHSIAS LIKE TO BE COOL: Minimum night temperature 50°F (10°C) **Maximum** day temperature 70°F (21°C)

LIGHT: Indoors they need bright, diffused light. Outdoors, partial shade, NOT full sun.

WATER: WATERING is important, NEVER let fuchsias dry out!

Keep the soil uniformly moist without over watering. Allow the plant to become half dry and then soak thoroughly. In the heat of summer daily watering maybe required and frequent misting will help to provide coolness. Learn the weight of a newly watered hanging basket so that you can check the lightness to know when watering is needed.

FERTILIZE once a week with a fertilizer such as 15-30-15 to keep your fuchsia in constant bloom.

OVERWINTERING

One method of keeping plants from year to year is by taking and growing cuttings. But fuchsias can also be kept for several years by making the plants dormant and storing them in this dormant state in a frost-free location for the winter.

To induce dormancy, watering is gradually reduced in September and October until growth stops. If possible during this period, the plants should be put outside in the sun during the day, to help harden (ripen) the bark on the shoots. Well ripened shoots are less likely to die back during the winter storage period than are green shoots. The dormant plants are then stored in a frost-free place for the winter, and checked every two weeks to make sure that the soil in the pot is still moist. If it is too dry, thoroughly soak the soil with tepid water, which should be sufficient for several more weeks.

If there is any sign of premature growth, the atmosphere is too warm, and the plants should be moved to a cooler (but still frost-free) location. Early in spring bring the plants out and prune back to one or two buds per shoot. All weak and crossing shoots should be removed at this time, so that the plant has a reasonably open shape. Knock out the plant from the pot and remove as much of the old soil as possible, and then repot into a pot that will just take the root ball, using Pro-Mix potting soil.

The plant is then put in a greenhouse or other warm place and misted once or twice a day. The pot should not be watered until the plant starts to grow, because it is easy to kill plants by over watering at this stage. Once growth starts, water sparingly until the shoots are growing vigorously. Then the new shoots can be stopped to increase the size of the head. When the pots are full of roots the plants are repotted into 18 to 20 cm pots using Pro-Mix potting soil.

This method of over wintering is satisfactory for those who are not able to keep the fuchsias in a warm enough temperature (50°F, 10°C). Plants will continue to grow for many years with over wintering, but unfortunately the flowers gradually get smaller. Eventually it will be preferable to start again with new plants raised from cuttings.



TAKING FUCHSIA CUTTINGS

Cuttings can be taken in summer and fall if you have facilities to over winter them, but is usually better to take spring cuttings from the first growth of your wintered plant. The taking of cuttings has the extra benefit of provoking breaks in the branching of your mother plant for extra bushiness. The cuttings are dipped in rooting hormone and rooted in moist Pro-Mix.

Five or six cuttings can be started in a clay pot and encased in a clear plastic bag as a mini-greenhouse. A wire scaffold is devised to hold the plastic clear of foliage.

The different flower types of fuchsia hybrids.

- D. = Double flower
- S. = Single flowers
- S.D. = Semi-double flowers
- T. = *Triphylla* hybrids; all these have long tubes, short sepals, and small single corollas
- P. = flower showing petaloids.

UPRIGHT GROWING BUSH-TYPE FUCHSIAS

- **Dollar Princess** – Bright red, double flower with very dark purple centre
- **Gartenmeister** – Long, orange, single flower with bright orange centre
- **Lena** – Small, pale pink, double flower with lavender-blue centre
- **Shadow Dancer 'Betty'** – Heat tolerant, vivid red sepals, white corolla and upright, compact growth, full sun/part shade
- **Ballerina Red/White** – a single, red & white flower – ideal for planters or baskets, fertilize regularly
- **Ballerina Red/Blue** – a single, red & blue flower – ideal for planters or baskets, fertilize regularly
- **Electric Lights** – a Fuchsia hybrid, full sun/part shade – ht. 30 – 45 cm, feed every other week
- **Happy Lights** – a Fuchsia hybrid, full sun/part shade – ht. 30 – 45 cm, feed every other week

CASCADING OR HANGING BASKET VARIETIES (TRAILING)

- **Dark Eyes** - Red double flower, with deep purple centre
- **Southgate** – Fully pale pink single flower
- **Swingtime** – Pink double flower with white centre
- **Shadow Dancer 'Ginger'** – Peachy pink sepals, white corolla, semi trailing habit
- **Shadow Dancer 'Marcia'** – A showy combination of bright, cherry red sepals and a brilliant violet corolla, full sun/part shade
- **Shadow Dancer 'Violette'** – A compact habit and pastel pink-violet flowers, adds a dainty touch to mixed containers and hanging baskets, full sun/part shade
- **Shadow Dancer 'Peggy'** – White sepals and orange petals, full sun/part shade

Anyone interested in pursuing the study of fuchsias should contact: Geranium, Pelargonium and Fuchsia Society of Ontario
115 Coady Ave.
Toronto, Ontario M3M 2Y9

HUMBER NURSERIES LTD.

Ontario's Largest Garden Centre

8386 Hwy 50, Brampton, Ontario L6T 0A5

Ph: 416.798.8733 (TREE) Ph: 905.794.0555 Fax: 905.794.1311

www.humburnurseries.com humber@gardencentre.com

Get all of your gardening questions answered through the 'Ask the Experts' link on our website

