

Orange County Fuchsia Society



YOU Can Grow Fuchsias!

There are several thousand cultivars of fuchsias in seven basic colors: white, red, pink, fuchsias (rose), purple, orange and blue. Their growth habits vary from upright to trailing (baskets), allowing them to be trained in many different growth patterns. Their flowers range from petite to large. Some of them are singles with few petals, and others are doubles with many petals. Singles bloom constantly, while doubles bloom, rest, and bloom again.

Choosing the Right Fuchsias Is Important

The plants themselves differ widely in growth habit, culture requirements and most importantly, vigor. Fuchsias were not created equally, especially when considering heat and sun tolerance. Ask an experienced fuchsia grower which cultivars fit your situation best. Do not base your selection on flower appearance alone.

Fuchsias Need Filtered Sunlight

Fuchsias grow best in filtered sunlight. Early morning or very late afternoon sun will not harm them, but they will not tolerate mid-day sun except in winter. They also need good air

circulation. Hanging baskets should have a swivel hook so that you or the wind can turn them easily to promote even growth. Fuchsias grown in too much shade will show it by having very large leaves, large spaces between the nodes, or a striking absence of flowers. If possible, they should be moved to a brighter or sunnier location.

Fuchsias Grow Well in the Ground

Upright cultivars can be planted directly in the ground, in well-drained soil, as bushes, grouped as hedges, trained on trellises or in rings, or grown as short (up to 60 inch) trees. In fact, it is easier to grow fuchsias in the ground than in baskets. But remember that, even in the ground, they cannot tolerate hot-mid-day sunlight.

Fuchsias Make Attractive Baskets

If you wish to grow your fuchsias in baskets, ideal containers are 12- inch wooden baskets. Other suitable containers are moss baskets or clay or plastic pots. Any fuchsia can be grown in a basket, but the trailing types generally make the most attractive ones. Soil for baskets should be a light, fast-draining type. A recommended soil is 2 parts nitrolized redwood compost, 2 parts potting soil, and 1 part sponge rock (perlite).

Proper Watering is Important

Watering is guided by the weather. In the hot summer, it may be necessary to water every day; in cooler weather, every week may be sufficient. Feeling the soil can help you determine if you need to water, and if you do so, soak the plants thoroughly.

Be careful: on very hot days, some fuchsias cultivars will wilt and appear to need water. However, if the

soil is moist, they do not need water, and adding it might kill them. In fact, over-watering is the easiest way to kill the fuchsia. Avoid allowing your fuchsias to dry out completely, but also avoid watering so often that the roots remain soggy. (Those fuchsias that wilt during hot weather will usually perk up at night.) On very hot days, washing down the patio, grass, or decking will substantially reduce the temperature in your garden.

Fuchsias Need to be Fed Regularly

Your fuchsia will bloom almost all year. In order to guarantee this, they need to be fertilized every two weeks. We recommend a balanced fertilizer, e.g. 14-14-14 or 20-20-20, from mid-April until December. About December 1, fuchsias should be pruned and then should rest until about January 1. Then they should be fed a high-nitrogen fertilizer, such as 30-10-10, until mid-April, when the balanced fertilizer program is used.

A recommended solution of water-soluble fertilizer is ½ teaspoon per gallon of water. If you prefer a timed-release fertilizer, apply ½ teaspoon to a 4 inch pot or a scant tablespoon to a 10-12 inch basket (or to a plant in the ground). A timed-release fertilizer such as Osmocote 14-14-14 is applied every 3 months.

Whatever fertilizer you use, remember that more is *not* better! And remember: never fertilize a dry plant. Always water the plant first.

Fuchsias Need to be Pruned and Pinched

Pruning and pinching will make the difference between a beautiful fuchsia and an untended fuchsia. Unpruned fuchsias will continue growing but will not flower except at the tips. To ensure full growth and flowering, they need to be pruned. Your fuchsias will slow down in growth sometime after mid- November. Then it is time to prune off all foliage, leaving the main wood stems (about 6 inches long or to the edge of the basket for a basket plant; for fuchsias in the ground, prune off 1/3 of the plant, shape it,

and remove all leaves. Never prune a soaking wet plant. Leafless, it has no way to transpire water. Do not fertilize during this time and water very minimally. (Don't worry about rainwater.) In about 4-5 weeks you will see new growth emerging. This is the time to start pinching.

As a branch develops, it will form a pair of leaves. A second, smaller pair will develop at the tip of the first pair.



Pinch (or cut off) this top pair of leaves. We use small nippers or embroidery scissors to remove the tip. From the remaining leaf pair, two new pairs of leaves will emerge. As this new grouping develops, an

additional pair of small leaves will develop in the center of each pair. Then pinch out the center of each new pair. Always pinch only the growth tips that have 2 leaves below them. When you have a nice, bushy plant with 30 to 40 branches, stop pinching. It will take about seven weeks for your plant to bloom after you stop pinching. During the pinching season, fertilize with ½ strength acid fertilizer to encourage new growth.

Pests and Fungus are Fuchsias' Enemies

Whiteflies, spider mites, aphids, worms, and the devastating fuchsia gall mite are as dangerous to fuchsias as botrytis (gray mold blight). Botrytis can usually be cleared up with more air circulation and/or less water.

Cookes Garden Insect Spray containing

Thiodan: For whitefly, gall mite, and aphids, use as a spray (2 tablespoons per gallon).

Maverick: For gall mite, aphids, spider mite, use as a spray (2 teaspoons per 5 gallons).

Orthene: For whitefly, aphids, spider mite, use as a spray (2 tablespoon per gallon).

Orthenex: For whitefly, aphids, spider mite, use as a spray (2T per gallon). No longer available in CA.

Hot pepper wax: For gall mite, aphids, white flies, use as a spray (1 tablespoon per pint of warm water). To purchase, call 1-800-333-7979.

BT or Liquid Sevin: For worms, use as a spray. Follow bottle directions.

Volk Oil + Malathion: For whitefly, aphid, spider mite, gall mite, red spider mite. Use as a spray (1 tablespoon Volk Oil plus 1 tablespoon Malathion 50 per gallon).

Always read and follow manufacturer's directions on insecticides. It is recommended that 1 tablespoon of vinegar or lemon juice be added to each gallon of water to neutralize the alkaline found in California water. The acid will lower the PH for maximum effectiveness of the chemicals. and help prevent the plant from suffering from possible phytotoxic side effects. The vinegar should be added to the water before any of the chemicals are added. Sprays should be applied to both upper and lower sides of the leaves.

Fuchsia Gall Mite (Eriophyid)

Fuchsia mite causes a cancer-like growth on the tips of fuchsia plants. The rampant growth in its advanced forms has a furry appearance and a reddish color. It is transmitted by hummingbirds, bees, human hands and tools, and the wind. A good way to treat it is to wear rubber gloves or encase your hands in plastic sandwich bags secured at the wrists with rubber bands. Break off all damaged areas and place them in another plastic bag. Put this bag and damaged growth in the microwave for a couple of minutes, seal it, and place it in the garbage. For badly damaged plants, place the plant and the container in a sealed bag, lay it down on the pavement in the sun for a couple of days, and discard it. Spray the plants after removing the damaged growth. Also spray neighboring plants, upper and lower sides of

the leaves. You need spray only fuchsias, as other plants are not affected. The gestation period of the fuchsia gall mite is 4 days, so spray thoroughly three times at 4-day intervals and keep a watchful eye. It will probably be under control, but you may get it again from birds, bees, etc. If you deal with the mites within minutes of its discovery, it will never be a problem in your garden.

Summer Care of Fuchsias

Summer is a time to enjoy your fuchsias, remembering to keep the plants free of spent blooms, seed pods and dead leaves. Fertilizing with half-strength 20-20-20 every two weeks will keep the blooms coming. The biggest single killer of fuchsias in Southern California is the Santa Ana winds, which act like a blowtorch. The easiest way to combat this is to move your basket and potted plants inside until all is well, or put them on the ground in a shady spot protected from the wind. Enjoy your fuchsias!

<http://www.ocfuchsiasociety.com>

<http://www.americanfuchsiasociety.org>

<http://www.ccfuchsia.net>

<http://www.nwfuchsiasociety.com>

The Orange County Fuchsia Society extends an invitation for you to join us on the first Tuesday of the month at the Garden Grove Friends Church, 12211 Magnolia Avenue, Garden Grove at 7:30 P.M. Monthly meetings feature culture information, plant table, speakers, and refreshments. Guests are always welcome. For additional information, call (714) 661-8439.

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