



# Garden Clippings



Niagara College Greenhouse & Nursery Success Sheet No. 24

## Fuchsia Hanging Baskets

### Fuchsia Facts

Fuchsias were originally grown in the mountainous areas of Central and South America, as well as New Zealand and Tahiti. They are now commonly grown as small shrubs, one to two feet tall, often used in hanging baskets.

Belonging to the evening primrose family, *Onograceae*, fuchsias have a long flowering season. They bloom throughout early summer and well into autumn. Fuchsias are known as tender perennials (performing well the first year) or warm-weather annuals (plants that thrive in summer heat and germinate, flower, set seed and die in one season.)

### Description

Fuchsias have showy, hanging bell-shaped flowers, with elegantly flared or backward-curved sepals (petals). The two-part flower consists of sepals and corolla (tube). The mid-green leaves are spherical to cylindrical and have smooth edges.

There are hundreds of the fuchsia species, consisting of a vast number of vivid colour combinations. Some are one-coloured while others are bi-coloured. Common colours include pink, purple, cream, and mauve. Bi-coloured flowers consist of petals of one hue and a tube and four sepals of another. The plants bloom in singles (one row of four to six petals), semi-doubles (usually two rows with more petals) or doubles (several rows with many petals).

### Requirements

Fuchsias need a sheltered, partially shaded position. Full morning sun and afternoon

shade are acceptable except where stated otherwise. Shade is essential during hot summers.

For a thriving plant, do not allow the soil to dry out, but keep it evenly moist. Regular or daily watering is required during a hot summer.

Fuchsias require a rich, fertile, well-drained soil. Feed weekly in the summer with a balanced fertilizer high in nitrogen (one with a rating of 15-30-15 or 20-20-20).

A minimum temperature of 5E C. (41E F.) is required. Loss of growth on the top of the plant is caused by prolonged periods of low temperatures. Temperatures exceeding 32E C. (90E F.) should be avoided.

To keep fuchsias blooming all summer, weekly deadheading (the removal of spent blooms) is required. This will keep the plant looking tidy while increasing growth and flowering.

### Special Attractions

People love the beauty, elegance and vivid colour fuchsias add to the garden, and hummingbirds love them, too. Hummingbirds, which are up to 3½" long, yet weigh scarcely more than a dime, are attracted to the trumpet-shaped flowers and bright colours.

Inside the flower is a cherry-like fruit containing the seeds. Once the edible berries ripen to a deep red, they can be used to make a fuchsia pie! However, most people wouldn't attempt it because the berries are poorly flavoured with a slightly astringent taste.

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