

AMERICAN FUCHSIA SOCIETY  
BASIC FUCHSIA CULTURE  
*updated: March 27 2016*

The fuchsia growing cycle starts early spring, when the weather begins to warm after the last frost or hard freeze. The cycle ends in October or November when fuchsias go dormant.

### **Pruning and Repotting**

Container plants can be repotted and pruned at the same time. Most people prune mid February to late March depending on your local microclimate. You must prune because fuchsias bloom on new growth. Prune hanging baskets back to the edge of the pot leaving at least two leaf nodes for new growth. Remove one third to one half of the height of upright plants and prune lateral growth back to two nodes from the main stem. If the plant is root bound, you can root prune by cutting off about one inch of the soil from the outside of the root ball and a couple inches off the bottom. Add fresh soil and water your plant.

### **Potting Mixtures**

The essential elements of any planting mix must provide good drainage and aeration. Select any good commercial mix for your potting soil. Add 0-20% perlite, pumice, washed sand, or cactus mix to insure adequate drainage and aeration.

### **Watering**

During the growing season, keep plants moist, but not wet. Water if the soil feels dry. In warmer climates, fuchsias may need to be watered on a daily basis. It's best to water early morning or late evening. When it's hot, fuchsias close leaf openings to prevent water loss, which causes the plant to wilt. If your plant looks wilted, do not water unless the plant soil is dry. If it's hot, and your plant looks wilted but the soil is not dry, it best to move your plant to a cool shaded location and mist the leaves to provide a cooling effect. During the winter months, check your fuchsias periodically to ensure they do not totally dry out. During the dormant season, they only need enough water to stay alive.

### **Light and Sun Exposure**

Avoid planting fuchsias in full sun or deep shade, as they need filtered sun to bloom. Fuchsias will tolerate early morning sun. All- day, filtered sun under trees, lath structures or shade cloth is ideal.

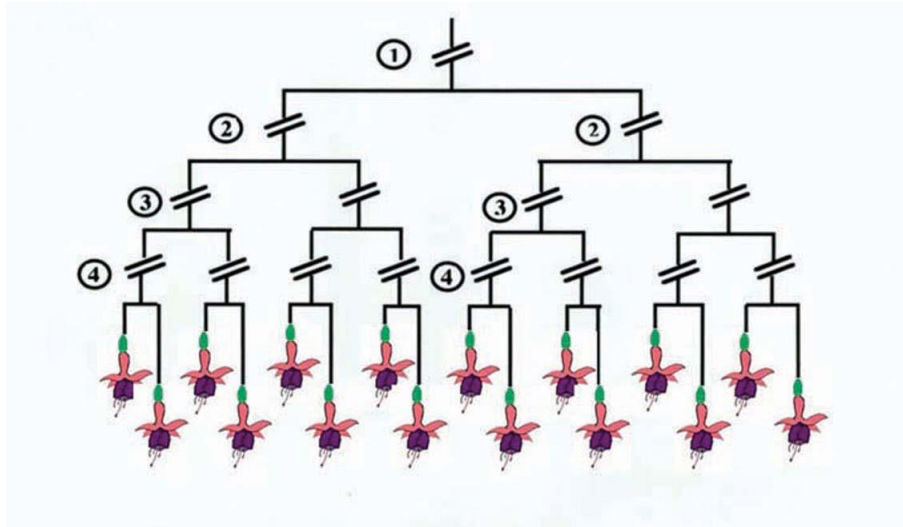
### **Fertilization**

Fuchsias are considered heavy feeders and must be fertilized to do well. It's best to feed with a balanced fertilizer that has numbers like 18-18-18 indicated on the package or container. Do not fertilize a dry plant. Apply fertilizer at ½ strength, once week or ¼ strength, each time you water. Do not exceed manufactures recommended dosage.

### **Pinching or Shaping**

Pinch or cut out the growing tip of new growth to encourage additional new lateral branches, which will also cause the plant to have more blossoms. When new growth has produced two new sets of leaves, pinch out the center tip again. Two more new

branches will form from this pinch. Pinching your plant 2-3 times is usually adequate.



Most plants will bloom 6-10 weeks after the last pinch. During the growing season remove the seedpods, so you plant will continue to flower.

#### **Pests**

Whiteflies are a common pest that is difficult to get rid of. You can clean up a whitefly infestation by spraying every four days. A non-toxic solution that works well on most common fuchsia pests like aphids, spider mites and whiteflies is to use a quart container, add 1 cup of 70% Isopropyl rubbing alcohol and a few drops of liquid soap as a sticking agent. Fill the rest of the quart container with water, mix and spray. This spray solution is a contact spray, which means the spray must come in contact with the pest to be effective.

**Controlling Fuchsia Gall Mites:** You cannot see fuchsia gall mites with the naked eye but you can see the plant damage they cause. While disfigured plant material is unpleasant to look at, you do not have to leave it on the plant. The American Fuchsia Society has proven, that the amount of gall mite plant damage caused by gall mites, can be controlled by removing (cutting off) gall mite plant damage (disfigured, swollen plant material) below the nearest node, as soon as you notice it. It's easy, takes about the same amount of time, it takes to dead head (cut off) an old rose flower. It's always best to continue reducing the number of gall mites on your plant, by contacting a local fuchsia branch or local nursery for current recommendation. Always water your plant before applying systemic products. Be sure to follow manufactures recommended dosage, spray intervals and safety precautions.

For more info, visit the American Fuchsia Society (AFS) website:

[www.americanfuchsiasociety.org/articledirectory](http://www.americanfuchsiasociety.org/articledirectory)

or click on fuchsia consultant. You can also find our nearest AFS Branch locations & meeting times on the website.