

## **Fuchsia Care Instructions**

### **Planting in Containers:**

Fuchsias do best in hanging baskets made of coconut fiber. Place a light plastic saucer in the bottom of the basket to act as a water reservoir. Cover with soil, then place the plant in the middle of the basket. Like tomato plants, roots & stems can be buried deeply. Cover lower leafless nodes with soil.

### **Maintenance:**

To encourage thick, bushy fuchsias, pinch off tip nodes every 2-3 weeks early in the growing season. If new growth becomes spindly, pinch back 2-3 nodes. Pot-up to the next size basket as soon as the root mass becomes too thick. Monitor leaf size & blooms. If new leaves become smaller & blooms more infrequent, sprinkle some more slow release 15-30-15 fertilizer on the soil. On hot and/or windy days they will need to be watered twice a day.

### **Fertilization**

1. In early spring, when new growth appears and plants go outside (March-early April, after night frosts), apply a timed released 15-30-15 fertilizer.
2. Starting in early June apply ½ strength 24-8-16 fertilizer solution every / every other week.
3. At the end of July, re-apply slow release 15-30-15 fertilizer. Note: these fuchsias will bloom all summer, but they prefer cool nights. The most profuse bloom time is early fall until frost, in time for the hummingbird migration.

### **Winter Care**

My fuchsias overwinter in a slightly heated shed. I trim them back to around 8 inches in height, with no branches hanging over the sides (not enough space otherwise!), making sure that some green leaves remain on the plant. Other people have been successful overwintering them in a garage, in which case they can be cut back less severely. They can tolerate cold temperatures, but not frost. Hold back on watering (once a week, enough to keep them from drying out). They might lose most of their leaves and enter a rest period. When in doubt, scratch a small area on one of the stems - if some green shows, the plant is alive.

Once new growth starts to appear, (mid- January/February) I add a tiny amount of a 24-8-16 fertilizer to the weekly watering. As soon as possible, I bring them outside. They spend the first couple of weeks under the eaves of the house in complete shade to get used to increased light levels. After that time they go to their permanent location until late fall.