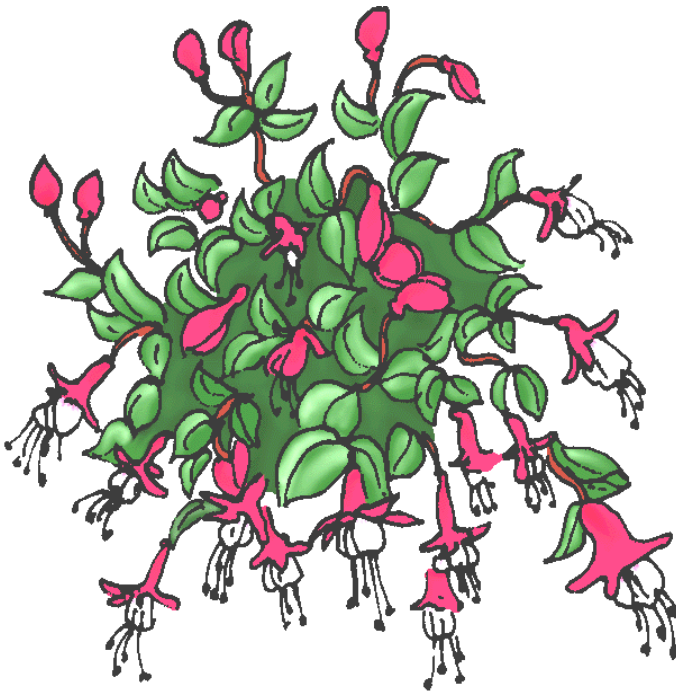


Fuchsias

These showy annuals are beautiful hanging plants or centerpieces in any shade container. The distinctive flowers of Fuchsia are now available in many colors and combinations. A shady space should be found every summer for an easy to care for Fuchsia.



Fuchsias do best if they receive at least four hours of direct sunlight a day but are protected from the hot midday sun. A site with morning sun is ideal. They also need to be sheltered from wind. Fuchsias thrive in Montana's warm days and cool nights. Keep the soil moist but not soggy, especially when the plant is flowering, to avoid losing blossoms. Fertilize every two weeks with a water-soluble fertilizer with high phosphorus such as 10-50-10 formula.

When temperatures are very hot for an extended number of days, the Fuchsia may wilt like it needs water but the soil may still be damp. At this point you should mist the plant but don't add water to the pot until it is dry. The plant needs the humidity increased

but not too much moisture in the soil. You can kill the plant by over watering at this stage. This typically occurs during the hottest days of summer when the daytime temperatures are high and the nights do not cool down as much as normal.

Fuchsia benefit from deadheading spent flowers during the season. The flowers should be pinched off above the seedpod after they start to wilt. This will keep your plant flowering all summer long. Pinching about 1/3rd of the growing tips off the plant will encourage branching and produce fuller plants with more blooms.

Aphids or spider mites are the most common pests. They can be controlled with many common chemical or organic insecticides. With either type of pesticide, you need to spray, wait 3 days and spray again to defeat both pest's reproductive cycles.

To keep your Fuchsia from year to year, bring it inside before the first fall frost. The best place to keep it is a cool (55°F) spot with some bright, indirect light. As the days get shorter, the plant will go semi-dormant and lose some of its leaves. At this point, cut it back to about half the size it was when you brought it in from outside. From here on water sparingly until about the first of March. Then take it to a warm sunny window. Water it with an all-purpose water-soluble fertilizer and it will start growing again. You should pinch out the growing tips as they get about 5-6 inches long until about the first of May. This will produce a well-branched flowering plant. Do not put your Fuchsia outside until all danger of frost is past.

The Plant Land staff can answer any further questions you may have.