



# J&L Garden Center

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620 North 500 West Bountiful, Utah 292-0421

[www.JLGardenCenter.com](http://www.JLGardenCenter.com)

## Fuchsia Care



For years the delicate fuchsia has been the favorite of many gardeners. Some of the varieties date back for better than a century. Many people think of the Fuchsia as “My Grandmother’s Flower” as they clearly remember her having them in her garden. There are hundreds of varieties of Fuchsias in existence today. Each year hybridizers bring more varieties to the market for the people to enjoy. Some of these are great improvements over the old-timers and yet some of the old-timers cannot be beaten.

### Types

Fuchsias grow in many sizes, shapes, forms, colors, and habits. The blooms range from miniature to very large, and from single to extremely double. Some of the flowers are tight and closely formed, while others are loose and “ragged.” Some of the singles open flat, giving an airy and open appearance. Most of us think only of a bush or a hanging basket when planting Fuchsias. They can also be treated and grown as espaliers, pyramids, trees, and fans.



Trailing Fuchsias in hanging baskets have captured the majority of the Fuchsia Fancier’s hearts. These fascinating plants can be used in background plantings, in pots scattered here and there, in hanging baskets, in window or porch boxes, and in mass plantings. They are so very versatile that almost everyone has need of them in their landscape plans.



### Color Range

A wide variety of colors and hues are found in the Fuchsia family. While some flowers are a single color, others may have two or three distinct colors. Some colors are pastel and others are bright, eye-catching colors. Fuchsia can be found in white, shades of pink, blue, shades of red, purple, rose, magenta, lavender and even orange. The hues within the color ranges add touches of smokiness to some, while others may take on an iridescence. The flowers are not fragrant but hummingbirds are attracted to the flowers and visit them frequently.



### Location

While most Fuchsias are a shade loving flower, many

of the varieties can stand considerable heat and sun, if they are kept humid and moist. The red, single varieties are best for the sun. The lighter shades of Fuchsias require more shade. Pastels will thrive in total shade. All fuchsias like high humidity and an average soil moisture.



The favorite Fuchsia of the majority of the “Fuchsia Enthusiasts” for several years has been Swingtime. It is a very good, sturdy, heavy blooming, non-temperamental variety. It is most often used as a trailer, but once in a while it can be found trained into a tree. Other varieties such as Dark Eyes, Blue Eyes, Bicentennial, and Dollar Princess have also captured the eyes of many gardeners. Many other colorful and vigorous varieties are also available.

### Water Carefully

Water fuchsias as they dry out. It is almost impossible to water a fuchsia in a hanging basket too much, during the summer. No two fuchsias always need the same amount of water, on a regular basis. During the warm days of summer, Fuchsias need much more water than they do early in the season. However, they should be watered only when needed and not necessarily at any regular time interval. Some plants, those with the most foliage, require more water than others. Some pots and soils will hold and retain more water than other soils. Check your plants regularly to determine their specific water needs.



Water your fuchsia when the plant begins to wilt or when the soil dries out to the touch. If a fuchsia dries out too severely you may need to soak your plant in a bucket of water for several hours; instead of just watering it normally. Place your entire fuchsia plant in a large bucket or in the bath tub until the soil is completely wet. A “Dry Plant” will not absorb water; the water will just run off,

and the plant will stay dry. If your fuchsia dries out too severely the blossoms will drop off the plant and it may take about two or three weeks for new flowers to form. In these severe cases of drought trim the branches back about a third to help stimulate new growth.



Occasionally a plant will “drown”. This is caused from over-watering or poor drainage. If a plant is wilted, when the temperature is below 80, and the soil is extremely moist, you are probably over watering rather than under watering. If this condition continues than seven to ten days, the plant will probably die no matter what you do to revive it. If the “drowned” Fuchsia is caught in the first day or so, and you stop watering it for several days, to give the soil a chance to dry out, the plant has a good chance to survive. Be careful not to let your plant dry out too much before you start watering it again.

## Fertilize Often

Fertilize Fuchsias regularly to help them grow vigorously and bloom profusely. As the weather warms, the Fuchsias should be fertilized more frequently than when the weather is cool. Fertilize them every week to ten days during the summer; alternating between **Schultz All Purpose Plant Food** and **Schultz Blooming Fertilizer**. By alternating between these two fertilizers you will give the plants everything they need to continue growing and blooming all summer.



Be sure to flush out all the excess fertilizer that may build up in the soil. Every four to six weeks flush the soil by slowly watering the pot for several minutes allowing the water drain away.



## Insects and Diseases

Like anything really lovely out in the garden, Fuchsias have a pest or two. Aphids, Whiteflies, Strawberry Root Weevil and Red Spider Mites are a few insects that like to bother them. Insects on the foliage can be controlled with **Schultz Rose & Flower Spray** or **Malathion Spray**. For many soil insects such as Strawberry Root Weevil, use a systemic insecticide such as **Orthene** or the houseplant **Systemic Granules**.



One disease that has plagued the Fuchsias in the past has been called “blight” by most of the fuchsia growers. This disease spreads and travels very fast during warm weather. Sometimes it strikes only one or two branches and other times it will kill the entire plant. The best way to avoid this disease is to keep the plants well ventilated, not too wet, and well spaced. Remove all dead leaves, branches, and blossoms as soon as you see them to prevent this disease from spreading further in the plant.

## Winter Care

Fuchsia plants are perennial and may live several years if they are cared for properly. Most Fuchsias will not stand the winter weather below 25: they will die if not protected during the winter.

Those fortunate enough to have a greenhouse in which to put their Fuchsias during the winter must remember not to try to keep the plants growing and blooming all winter. They need time for rest. During the winter months the temperature in the greenhouses need be only 35 to 40. In February raise the temperature to 45 or 50 for faster growth. When you raise the temperature repot the plants into larger pots. At this time, the plants can be trimmed, pruned and pinched. Proper pinching and trimming causes the plant to be bushier. You can train the trailing and bush types of fuchsias into trees or espaliered plants, if you want to take the time.

Those who do not have a greenhouse to keep their fuchsias in during the winter have a hard time keeping them alive through the winter because of the difficulty controlling the temperature, giving them enough light, watering properly, and trying to keep the insects off the plants while in the house. Sometimes it is just best to but a new plant each spring.

## Cuttings

New introductions are created by cross-pollination. This painstaking task sometimes takes years of work to find the new variety the originator is looking for. After the new introductions are found they are increased by cuttings.



Tip cuttings are the best. Take a cutting about 3 or 4 inches long, cutting just under the leaf joint. Cut off the bottom set of leaves near their base. Dip stem into **Rootone** and insert the cuttings about one inch into good coarse sand. Keep it moist and warm. In about ten days to two weeks the cuttings should be rooted. Some varieties root very easily, while others are extremely difficult to get to root. Be patient.

After the cutting is rooted it should be placed in a small pot, 2 1/2 inch size, in seed starting potting soil. Again it should be kept moist and warm for fast growth for at least two or three weeks.

In a month or so, this cutting should be potted into a four inch pot. The soil should be a good, water holding potting soil such as **Black Gold Coco Blend Potting Soil**. Fertilize with a water soluble fertilizer such as **Schultz All Purpose Plant Food** every two or three weeks. Wait until the plant become very bushy before you transfer it into a larger container. It is best to repot cuttings before they start to bloom. You want stem growth, not blossoms. Blossoms will come a little later, after a good size plant is formed.

