



FUCHSIA PROBLEM SOLVING

Good strong-growing plants are less susceptible to diseases, pests, and weather conditions. Use open potting soil, keep plants positioned to avoid shock in sudden cold or hot weather, keep plants separated for air circulation, don't overwater, and fertilize weekly with a 1/4 strength balanced fertilizer. Don't substitute the fertilizing for regular watering, and always ensure the soil is damp before fertilizing. Watch your plants for problems such as:

YELLOWING LEAVES Progressive yellowing of the oldest leaves means your plants need fertilizing. Fuchsias are heavy feeders.

LEAF DROP Something has prompted the plant to drop leaves to survive—shock. It could be inadequate light, drying out, or overwatering. Leaf drop is especially common in hot weather.

SCORCH MARKS Marks on leaf tops or tips may be caused by salt damage, chemicals/fertilizers being used incorrectly or by extremely hot weather. Do not over-feed, try to minimize effect of extreme heat by placing plants in as cool a place as possible and keeping air hydrated if possible. Mist plants in mornings to compensate for heat. Water scorched plants thoroughly.

DUSTY RED LEAVES Red spider mites are especially a problem in hot, dry weather. Isolate affected plants & spray top AND BOTTOM of leaves with a miticide spray. Repeat spraying. Misting plants with plain water will help the plants fight this infestation off. If severe, prune & destroy pruning.

SMALL WHITE BUGS Whitefly! Treat with one of the commercial sprays suitable for fuchsias such as Orthene, a soap solution, or other recipes you may have acquired. Spray regularly, as only adults are killed. Spray over & under leaves, but avoid spraying blossoms. Repeat spraying often, usually every three days.

GREY MOLD Most common in cold, wet weather. Control watering, improve air circulation around plants, and remove all dead or damaged leaves.

RUSTY RED LESIONS The appearance of red circular lesions on older leaves is a symptom of fungus or rust. The rust spores disperse, and a dead, circular patch is left behind. Rust is prevalent in warm, humid weather (greenhouse anyone?). Remove all damaged leaves and destroy. Obviously, you want to catch this early rather than late, or you could end up with a leafless plant as you combat the rust.

LEAF REDNESS This usually shows up when plants are exposed to low temperatures, especially if there is a rapid temperature drop. This usually causes little problem, except in the plant's appearance.

FLOWER DROP Your plant has had a shock. Often this is caused by inadequate light, or the plant has dried out too rapidly due to dry weather/wind. Fuchsias need to be kept damp. Morning watering and misting are best solutions to keep from dry out, especially in microclimates (like the whole east side) where wind is chronic. Ensure you do the best you can to protect your plants from excessive heat.

TIMELY FUCHSIA TIPS

Stop pinching plants, especially if you are bringing them to the show in early August. Pinching between now & then could result in plants not showing full bloom at the show. Judges are not pleased with plants that have inadequate bloom production at show time.

Make sure plants get plenty of light, and turn them a quarter turn each week to balance their growth. This applies to hanging baskets and uprights in containers.

Fuchsias like to be damp but not wet. If they look wilted, check the container for how heavy it is before just assuming the plant needs water. You could be drowning it. A heavy pot does not need the soil watered. It may appreciate misting or you might place it on the ground in a cool, damp, and shady spot if it's hot.

Watch for pests or disease and treat accordingly before it gets out of hand on the primary plant and can spread to others. Watch especially for aphids during the time that plants are putting out tender new growth and for spider mites when it is hot and dry. And warm and humid weather . . . rust. Or cold, wet weather . . . mold.

Keep the soil surface clean to discourage pests and disease.

Are you following your regular fertilizer program? Fertilize at least once a week with a full strength balanced fertilizer. Or use 1/4 strength if fertilizing with each watering. Remember that the soil must be damp before you water with your liquid fertilizer mix. A dry plant does not like to have fertilizer added. Don't plan to replace your regular watering with diluted liquid fertilizer. Do both.

Turn container fuchsias—pots & baskets—to obtain even growth & pleasing shape.

Pick off spent seed pods and blooms so plant spends more energy on new growth & blossoms.