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# How to Grow Fuchsia: The Complete Flower Guide



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# Planting, Growing, and Caring for Fuchsia Plants

By [Andy Wilcox](#)

Last Updated: November 24, 2024



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A hanging basket star, hummingbird magnet, and shade-tolerant bloomer? What is not to love! Fuchsias are loaded with stunning, two-toned flowers and showy foliage.

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This beauty isn't high maintenance, but you do need to know its growing requirements. Learn how to grow and care for

# About Fuchsias

Fashion fades but style remains, and fuchsia (FEW-shuh) oozes style, with its spectacularly elegant and exotic jewel-tone pendulous flowers that look more like handcrafted silk than nature's handiwork.

Often featuring bicolor bell shaped flowers, fuchsias come in various colors, but most often in gorgeous bright reds, pinks, and salmons, with white or purple centers. The flower's outer portion comprises colored sepals, which protect the inner petals and reproductive bits.

The dark green leaves are typically oval shaped, with a pointed tip and dispersed alternately along the stem.

Fuchsias are a favorite for hummingbirds, who are attracted to the colors and long, bell-shaped flowers that hang and droop beautifully from hanging baskets, containers, and planters. The blossoms are also beloved by other pollinators including bees, butterflies, and moths. Fuchsia plants can be bushy or vining and trailing.

Many fuchsias will slow or stop blooming when temperatures rise above 80 degrees, but some heat-loving varieties are available.



*Fuchsia in a hanging basket. Credit:  
Sakss*

## History

The plant was discovered in Hispaniola (today, the island of the Dominican Republic and Haiti) and described by French friar and botanist Charles Plumier (1646–1704) in the 1690s. He chose the genus name to honor 16th-century German botanist Leonhard Fuchs (1501–66). However, this semitropical to tropical gem was not cultivated and propagated in Europe for nearly a century.

In 1788, fuchsia was introduced to England's Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, where a nurseryman was able to reproduce several hundred plants from cuttings. In the ensuing years, new species and varieties were discovered, hybridized, and multiplied by botanists and growers across Europe. As they shared their plant stocks and knowledge in colorful catalogs, the demand for ever-different forms and flower hues for public gardens and private properties exploded.

## ADVERTISEMENT

Today, more than 100 species are known, and thousands of cultivars have been developed (although not all of these may be available or easily acquired). A member of the evening primrose family (Onagraceae), fuchsia is native to Central and South America; three species, including a tree form, are indigenous to New Zealand.

## Are Fuchsias Perennials or Annuals?

While fuchsias are grown as perennial garden flowers in mild climates worldwide, they are treated as a cool-season plant used as an annual, primarily as potted flowering plants and in hanging baskets in the United States and Canada.

That said, fuchsia can survive over winter

in February cut back to the woody sections to promote new growth in spring.

#### Read Next

- [How to Grow Verbenas: The Complete Verbena Flower Guide](#)
- [How to Grow Bellflowers: The Complete Guide to Campanula](#)
- [How to Grow Flowering Maples: The Complete Chinese Lantern Guide](#)

## PLANTING

Fuchsias are considered part-shade plants, which is an excellent opportunity for gardeners; however, they do need at least four hours of light to bloom—either dappled sunlight all day or direct morning sun. They prefer summer temperatures below 85°F and cool nights. So those in southern locations should place their fuchsias in a spot with afternoon shade or even all-day protection.

However, fuchsias are not too fussy if their moisture needs are met and the soil does not get soggy wet nor bown dry.

able potting mixes are close to neutral pH already. If you are filling your containers from a bag and not mixing your own, chances are your soil will be fine.



Red and purple fuchsia up close.

Credit: Tohuwabohu

## When to Plant Fuchsias

Fuchsias like cool temperatures and can be planted in spring as soon as night temperatures stabilize above about 40 degrees. They grow best in the cool nights and temperate days of late spring and early summer.

## How to Plant Fuchsias

Choose an area that has plenty of shade, and partial sunlight, filtered if possible.

The area will need to have well

Prepare the soil by adding compost or organic matter and mix it well.

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Dig a small hole that is just a bit bigger than the root ball of your plant and place it gently in. Loosen the roots if they are tangled, before putting it in the ground.

Fill the hole with soil and gently press down around the plant, and then water it thoroughly so the soil is moist. At this point you could also add a layer of mulch around the base to protect it and stop any weeds coming through.

organic material to retain moisture.

- A wooden or fiber pot will not dry out as quickly as a clay pot and allow the plant to breath.
- Make sure any container has drainage holes. Fuchsias don't like to sit in water, even though they want their soil slightly moist.
- If your planter is large enough, tuck in two or three fuchsias to make a lush and overflowing planter display.
- Those in warmer locations can also grow fuchsias as outdoor perennials. Like a planter, select a site with dappled sunlight or light shade, and ensure you provide adequate drainage.
- Mulching will go a long way toward keeping the soil around your fuchsia at a more even moisture level and keeping the soil surface cooler.

## Propagating Fuchsias

Fuchsia can be grown from seeds or stem tip cuttings; the latter is the easier method, as the former can take up to 4

plants tend to bloom sooner than spring-rooted ones).

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Prepare containers with a seed-starting mix or use equal parts sand, perlite, and peat moss; moisten the medium. Cut off a green branch that is up to 6 inches long and has three pairs of leaves. Remove the bottom pair and dip the cut end into rooting hormone (if using; not necessary).

Insert the cutting into the medium up to the next leaves. Cover loosely with clear plastic and set in a warm, bright spot out of direct sun. Fall-rooted cuttings do not

Water enough to prevent wilting; avoid getting the leaves wet. When new leaf growth appears (in 3 to 4 weeks), lift the seedling and transplant it to a container.

## GROWING

- Containers need to be watered, usually once a day. Water when the surface of the growing medium becomes dry or hot but also don't let the soil become soggy. Keeping soil evenly moist in a hanging basket can be difficult. Add some compost to your potting mix, and check them daily, especially if the basket hangs under an overhang from a roof or porch.
- Fuchsias are heavy-feeders. If you're growing fuchsia in a container and watering frequently, you must fertilize as watering leaches nutrients. In the spring, fertilize every 2 weeks with a water soluble, complete fertilizer half-strength; once the plants set buds, water with a "bloom" formula. Stop fertilizing in the fall at least two weeks be-

- Deadheading your fuchsia will provide more blooms, allowing the plant to focus energy on flowering instead of making berries and seeds. If the flower has dropped off and the little green berry is left behind, pinch that off too.
- If your fuchsia is wilting, dropping flowers, or the tips of the leaves are turning brown, it could be underwatering. But do not water a wilted plant midday if the soil is still wet as this suffocates the roots!



Pink and white fuchsia flowers.  
Credit: Irene Miller

## Overview of Requirements

- **Light** - these plants don't like a lot of direct sun light - keep them in shady spots unless they're indoor plants. Indoor plants will need a bit of indirect sun light. They will need a small

best bloom, so choose a part shady

spot for your outdoor plants.

- **Soil** - you'll need a well-draining moist soil with plenty of organic matter. Add peat moss or compost before planting to encourage growth. Soil should be slightly acidic to neutral.
  - **Water** - fuschia needs plenty of water to keep the soil moist, but you don't want it to be soggy. They thrive in humidity. Any plants kept in a container will need daily watering. Overwatering and under watering these plants is not great, so stick to a routine.
  - **Temperature** - these plants grow best in temperatures between 55 and 80 degrees F, although there are some varieties that will do well in temperatures of up to 90. They typically don't do well in extreme heat or drought. In hot, dry areas, the plants will find it hard bloom. If you're predicting or experiencing a hot summer, make a backup plan to shelter your plants.
  - **Fertilizer** - fuschia need regular routine feeding as they are heavy feeders!
-

izers, fish emulsion or seaweed. Cut back on fertilizing as you enter the winter.

## Overwintering Fuchsias

- Fuchsias in a container or basket can be brought inside to overwinter. Bring the pot in before the first fall frost and store it in an unheated basement or other unlit areas where the temperature will remain about 45 to 55 degrees. If your plant is large, it's fine to cut back to the rim of the container or leave 6-inch stubs. Check for insects before bringing plants indoors.
- Water it occasionally (every 4 weeks) to keep the soil from becoming bone dry, but don't keep it as moist as it was all growing season. The foliage will fall off, and it might look dead. Don't give up.
- In the spring, move the plant to a bright window indoors or under a grow light and resume watering; when new growth appears, refresh the potting soil in the pot and return plant to

promote branching. Keep pinching all summer for the bushiest plant!

## Types



Fuchsia in a container. Credit:  
Wut\_Moppie

- Hardy bush fuchsia (*Fuchsia magellanica*). Wide varieties are available, some reaching as tall as ten feet. Hardy to USDA zones 6-9, these are some of the most cold-tolerant fuchsias. As the name implies, they have a bush habit and are loaded with pendant flowers.
- ‘Gartenmeister Bonstedt’ (*Fuchsia triphylla*) is a hardy fuchsia with an upright form, unusual darker bronzed foliage, and long, trumpet-shaped dark cherry blooms.
- ‘Rapunzel’ is a hanging basket star featuring violet and pale pink flowers and **incredibly long trailing stems**

Deep pink sepals with velvet violet petals in ruffles make this a hanging basket special.

- ‘Swingtime’ is a hybrid with a classical display of double white petals and bright apple-red sepals.
- ‘Aurea’ is the most commonly grown. Prostrate and upright with trailing habits, it grows 3 to 5 feet tall and/or wide in many color combinations.
- ‘Southgate’, a semi-trailing habit grows 4 to 8 inches tall and 18 to 24 inches wide. It has medium-size, double, light pink, bicolor flowers.
- ‘Dark Eyes’ is an upright shrub form growing from 1 to 2 feet tall and 24 to 30 inches wide. It has medium-size, double, red and violet-blue flowers/
- ‘Roesse Blacky’ is a shrub form with a lax and arching habit growing 1 foot tall and 1 to 2 feet wide. The medium-size, semidouble flowers are red and dark purple to black.
- ‘Cardinal’ is an upright shrub growing 3 to 6 feet tall and 3 to 4 feet wide with magenta and red flowers.

The flowers are semidouble and red

and violet in color.

- ‘Prince of Orange’ is a bush hybrid growing 2 feet tall and wide with pale orange to red-orange flowers.
- ‘Remembrance’ is another shrub hybrid, 3 to 4 feet tall and wide with pale pink and red flowers.

## HARVESTING

The berries produced after fuchsia flowers fade can be eaten or prepared as sauces and jams and in baked goods. They are best when soft and squishy; the flavor runs from peppery to lemony. Single-flower plants (not double- or semidouble-) usually produce more fruit because less of their energy goes into the flowers.

## GARDENING PRODUCTS



## PESTS/DISEASES

These vibrant plants are quite hardy, the hybrid varieties especially. Check your plants once a week, if they're going to be affected by something it will usually be:

- Aphids who suck out the sap causing damage and yellowing to the leaves.
- Whiteflies, another sap sucking pest that causes stunted growth.
- Thrips cause damage to the leaves. You should remove any infested or damaged leaves
- Spider mites to get rid of these nest.

- Fuchsia gall mite—*Aculops fuchsiae*, a mite specific to fuchsias which distorts their appearance.
- Stem rot.

## Are You Ready For Fuchsia?

These beautiful flowers are relatively easy to care for, producing stunning vibrant blooms which last for months on end.

They attract all kinds of wonderful wildlife, such as hummingbirds, bees and butterflies who come in search of their rich nectar.

These wonderfully versatile plants can be grown in many different places, from hanging baskets, to flower beds and can even be trained into a tree shape.

## ADVERTISEMENT

So what do you think? Are you ready to give these plants a go in your garden?

## WIT AND WISDOM

- Fuchsias were named for the famed German botanist Leonhard Fuchs in a description of plants found on the island of Hispaniola, now Haiti, published in 1703.
- Many fuchsias sold today are a hybrid of three or more species. Check this page from Penn State Extension for more fun fuchsia facts.
- Although California fuchsia, native to that state, has a red flower that resembles those of some Fuchsia species, it, in fact, is the species *Epilobium canum*.
- *F. excorticata* produces blue pollen, which at one time was used by Māori women in New Zealand to adorn ~~their faces~~

**FLOWERS**

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

### Andy Wilcox



Andy Wilcox is a flower farmer and master gardener with a passion for soil health, small producers, forestry, and horticulture.

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## COMMENTS

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**Linda (not verified)** 11 months 2 weeks ago

We've had winds 70 - 90 mph this week. Even though I protected my Fuschia as much as possible, all leaves are gone. Do you have any suggestions? Do I just cut it back? Thank you.

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**REPLY**

**The Editors** 11 months 2 weeks ago

Hi Linda,

Sorry to hear about your fuchsia.

They are such beautiful plants.

Typically you want to do your major pruning in the fall after the growing season or very early spring when new growth begins to emerge. Since fuchsias bloom on new growth and the

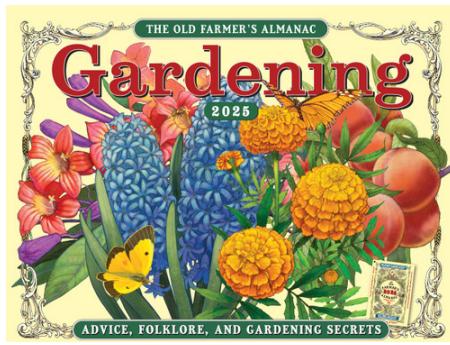
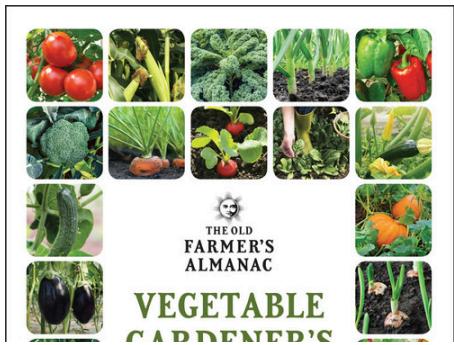
with that being said, you can certainly pinch back the stems to a leaf node (or where the leaves previously were), which will promote new growth for a bushier appearance.

With any luck, the loss of leaves will only affect the appearance and not this year's blooms. If it does not bloom, you will certainly want to prune it in the fall so it will be in the best growing condition for next year.

Hope this helps.

**REPLY**

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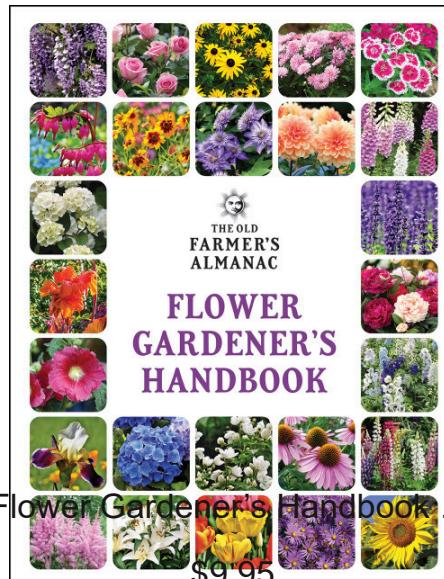
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