



Fact Sheet

Fuchsias

Fuchsias comprise a genus of over 200 varieties of mainly trees and shrubs. Most of the hybrids bred and sold these days can be traced back to 4 main parent species originating from Mexico and South America. The on going breeding program has concentrated on producing plants with desired form, growth habits, floral formation and colour. Needless to say fuchsias are among the most popular of garden plants sold today.

Fuchsias are named after Professor Leonard Fuchs a sixteenth century German physician who was also renowned for his outstanding botanical woodcuts.

Their cultural needs are not excessive, they prefer a well drained soil with some added humus though if too rich the resultant growth may become too lush. They do not like heavy frosts and will need a fairly regular water supply in summer to maintain condition. They also need some protection from hot sun, all varieties prefer some light shade cover, be it in the form of overhanging branches from trees or shadehouses such as that at the Hobart Botanic Gardens.

They have brittle stems which will break easily so all types except groundcovers should be staked or tied to some form of support. There are many different forms available from low prostrate types (fuchsia procumbens a popular groundcover variety is in fact a native of New Zealand), hanging basket varieties, types for window boxes, bushes, hedges, espaliers, tall shrubby varieties to 2m or taller. The trailing specimens can be used to make excellent standards when trained to only the main stem and staked.

Fuchsias will provide a long flowering season from late spring to autumn and do brilliantly in pots, though you will need to water daily especially in hanging baskets. Plants potted into fern tubs in a shady location can be a stunning sight. They are fairly shallow rooted hence mulching will be beneficial.

Young plants will benefit from regular tip pruning for up to 2 years to keep them bushy.

In late winter a fairly severe cut back is recommended (in fact very old plants can even be cut back to just about ground level to encourage regeneration) and an application of complete fertiliser (such as Dynamic Lifter) at that stage, plus if in the ground good amounts of sheep and cow manure. Regular monthly liquid feeds will keep the bush looking and performing at it's peak.



There are 3 main flower types:

- (i) Singles - these have 4 petals
- (ii) Semi doubles - 5-8 petals
- (iii) Doubles - "Full" flowers with more than 8 petals

Propagation

Propagate from soft tip cuttings in a sand/peat mixture in late spring and autumn or from seed after the berry that forms post flowering ripens. Seed grown plants do not necessarily have the same flower as it's parent.

Diseases

The main disease problem they suffer is rust where reddish/purple blotches form on the upper surfaces of leaves and yellow pustules underneath. High humidity and lack of air circulation as well as water on leaves encourages this situation. Spray with Zineb or Triforine to control.

Pests

Pests in Tasmania are usually mite problems where the leaves have a dull mottled appearance. Several sprays are on the market to assist, from the milder Clensel to the more toxic Rogor or Kelthane.



FUCSHIA FACT:

Fuchsias are members of the Evening Primrose family, Onagraceae. Correas otherwise known as native fuchsias (endemic to Tasmania and Mainland Australia) are in fact members of Citrus and Boronia family, Rutaceae.