

# THE PROPAGATION AND TRAINING OF STANDARD FUCHSIAS

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## PROPAGATION

In late February and early March cutting material was gathered from near the base of the standard ("tree") fuchsia plants. This basal growth tended to be more vigorous and sturdy and better suited to our requirements than top growth.

Tip cuttings of approximately 10 cm (4") long were made. The bases of the cuttings were dipped in Seradix II, before insertion in sharp river sand, with a bottom heat of 10° to 16°C.

It was found that no misting was necessary; a good watering 3 to 4 times per day was all that was required.

About two or three weeks later, roots were beginning to push and the plants were duly lifted from their rooting medium and potted into 3" fibre pots.

The potting medium was "John Innes" and consisted of 7 parts loam, 3 parts rotted leaf mould, 2 parts river sand. As there was a plentiful supply of fallen leaves in the autumn, rotted leaf mould was used in place of peat, with outstanding success.

The fertilizers added per cubic yard were: 2 lb superphosphate, 2 lbs dried blood, 1 lb sulphate of potash, 1 lb lime.

The soil mixture was fumigated with methyl bromide three weeks prior to using.

After potting, the fuchsias — in fibre pots — were placed in wood trays and well watered. They were kept in glass house conditions throughout the winter until early spring.

Fibre pots were used for two reasons:

1. The plants could be repotted without any root disturbance whatsoever, and
2. The roots could be allowed to penetrate and outgrow the pots without any detrimental effect upon the plants.

Regular watering and hygiene of plants included removal of fallen leaves, fortnightly sprays of fungicide and insecticide, plus regular feedings.

## TRAINING

The fuchsias were allowed to grow upright, keeping the terminal growth intact, but any side growths were pinched back to the first pair of leaves.

It was found that by keeping the main stem well clothed with foliage during the formative months, they ultimately developed a good strong stem, capable of standing on their own, sometimes without any other support. When a good root ball had developed, the plants were repotted into 6" clay pots and staked.

Winter temperatures in the glasshouse, not lower than 15° to 19°C, were maintained. In this way there was assured really good standard fuchsia plants by spring.

Tying of the plants commenced from the base and worked up the stem. As the plants grew, so the lower tie was being continuously removed and placed higher up the plant. Care was taken that the plants were not tied too tightly as a restriction could cause them to snap at the tie.

A strong main stem (well clothed) is first allowed to develop and then the plant is beheaded at the required height. In fuchsias the stems are rarely more than three feet in height.

Before the standard is "stopped" the final repotting is carried out. Great care must be taken when repotting from 6" into 8" clay pots (with the same potting medium and fertilizer base).

Upon "stopping", the liquid feed starts in earnest. Once a fortnight a foliar-feed type, e.g. Zest or Miracle Gro, as well as sulphate of potash (1 dessertspoon dissolved in 1 gallon of water), are used, e.g.:

7th of month	foliar feed
14th of month	sulphate of potash
21st of month	foliar feed
28th of month	sulphate of potash

When the standard is "stopped" the head commences to develop. The lateral growths push outwards and are pinched back at the second pair of leaves. Again the second growth from the laterals grows outwards and these are "stopped" at their second pair of leaves. From now on it is a continuous pinching back of each new flush of growth to the second pair of leaves, to develop the head.

All the growth along the main stem is now removed to allow the full intake of nutrients to go to the developing head.

A few early flower buds tend to develop but these are removed, until a good bushy head of sufficient size has developed.

About the middle of September, gradual "hardening off" is under way, the temperatures being gradually lowered.

It was found that as the watering and feeding was being eased down, that the roots of the fuchsias tended to grow into the porous clay pots. A sharp knife run down around the inside

of the clay pot was sufficient to prevent this happening.

By the middle of October, the standard fuchsias were transferred from the glass house to the shadehouse, and the final "hardening off" was in process.

Constant attention was still being paid to hygiene and cleanliness, with regular sprays of fungicides and insecticides.

During the first week of November, the plants were given a thorough soaking in preparation for removing from their pots and planting out into open beds.

### SUMMER BEDDING SCHEMES

Standard fuchsias were used as specimen plants, under which bedding begonias were massed. They are also attractive for bordering a path, the same way that standard roses are employed. They may also be used as specimen plants throughout a display greenhouse.

About a month after the cutting material was gathered the standard fuchsias were lifted and stored in sawdust frames within the shadehouse over the winter period.

### WHAT HAPPENS TO MY MANHOURS

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This paper is a description of a set of records I kept for a period of four years which helped me to go about my work more efficiently and make better use of my labor force.

I am the Production Manager of a container shrub unit attached to a mainly retail nursery. The production area covers about two acres and has turned out from 40,000 to 70,000 units a year of from 5-inch to 1-gallon sizes. I have a staff of 2 to 3 males and 2 females, mainly trainees. When I came to my present job ten years ago from growing house plants, the methods, soil mixes and so on were all new to me. The nursery was fairly new; the firm's outlines were set out but, in detail, were fairly sketchy. If one area of the nursery was under pressure we could be called on to help out.

It was felt after 12 months that productivity was too low, and I was encouraged to do some reading in management and work study. One of the main problems was to find out WHY we