



Annual Hanging Fuchsias

Annual hanging fuchsias can be purchased as starter plants in 2" pots, as larger plants, or in established budded or blooming baskets. The 2" plants are available in early spring for planting up your own baskets but should not be put outside until all danger of frost is past. Make sure you use enough starter plants to fill out your basket. Use a good quality potting soil for the best results.

Water is critical for fuchsias. In cool weather, plants may not need watering for a week at a time. Overwatering small plants in cool weather can cause root rot, which can quickly kill young plants. In hot weather, however, fuchsia baskets may need watering daily. A water meter is the most dependable way of checking soil moisture. Otherwise, check the soil daily in hot weather. Water after the top inch or so of soil has dried out. Water-storing crystals can be beneficial.

Sun exposure for fuchsias is important as well. Morning sun is ideal because fuchsias need protection from the hot afternoon sun. It's best to place your fuchsia baskets on the east side of the house, under hanging eaves or trees, or anywhere protected from afternoon sun. However, heavy all-day shade can decrease flower production.

Repeated flower production also requires good fertilization. We recommend applying a high quality liquid fertilizer once every two weeks while plants are young and once a week for mature plants. When using any fertilizer, be sure to dilute it to the manufacturer's recommended strength; using fertilizer incorrectly can burn your plants.

Pinch back your plants occasionally to keep them bushy. Groom them by removing spent flowers and seed pods (which resemble small cherries) to encourage continued flower production. Regularly clean off dead leaves and branches. Grooming will both reduce the risk of disease problems and keep your basket beautiful and blooming longer. Aphids can sometimes be a problem on fuchsias. Other problems usually stem from over or under watering. For aphid control, you can use ladybugs or organic pesticide sprays.

We hope these tips will help you to grow beautiful fuchsias this summer.

Storing Annual Fuchsias over the Winter

Sky Nursery sells hanging fuchsias as annual plants because over-wintering them is difficult without a greenhouse. However, with care it can be done. Here are some tips.

- In the fall after the leaves have fallen, trim the plants back to 8-10 inches. Spray with Neem oil to protect from fungal diseases.
- Remove the plants from their baskets and wrap the root ball in damp paper.
- The most important thing is to keep them as cool as possible without freezing, preferably between 35° and 45° F. A fruit cellar is ideal; an unheated garage or crawl space will usually work.
- If you don't have a suitable storage area, you can dig a pit or use a large wooden bin, and cover the fuchsias with dry leaves, straw, or any other coarse light material to insulate them.
- Maintain an adequate moisture level through the winter. More fuchsias die from drying out than from freezing.
- In late February or early March when the danger of extreme cold is past, move the fuchsias to an area that is warmer (about 50° F) and well-lit. Replant them, and when new growth shows, start fertilizing. Watch for insects and diseases which can thrive in the warmer environment.
- Pinch them back when they have grown about 4-6 inches. Place outside again after all danger of frost has passed, which is usually around mid April.