

KILL ALL THE GALL MITES

Rodney Bergquist

If you want to get over your fuchsia gall frustration, this article was written for you. We all want perfect unblemished fuchsias, but that's not the real world is it? There is no magic bullet. If you are not entering your plants in a show, competition, or a plant sale then your fuchsias are just another garden plant.

The gall mite problem is all about *visually seeing the disfigured plant material on your plant*. If you're frantic and fearful of disfigured plant material then maybe gardening is not your thing, because Mother Nature's bugs, insects and fungus are everywhere in the garden.

Janis & I had the good fortune to have met & spent some time with Peter Baye, PhD, Botanist. Peter has been our major American Fuchsia Society source of information & understanding regarding fuchsia gall mites & their control. Peter Baye had for many years grown gall mites at his home to test on his mite resistant fuchsias, so we regard his information as vital to our understanding of gall mite control. One day Peter Baye happened to stop by our house for a visit. I took the opportunity to explain to him that I was so frustrated trying several things including toxic systemic products to kill all the gall mites on my plants. He said: "YOU ARE WORKING TOO HARD TRYING TO KILL ALL THE GALL MITES ON YOUR FUCHSIAS". He said, "even if you were lucky enough to kill all the gall mites on your fuchsias this week, the neighbors and other fuchsia growers have not killed all the gall mites on their plants. The local hummingbird visits many neighborhood gardens including fuchsias grown in the wild and will possibly reintroduce a new generation of gall mites on the next visit to your garden. Realistically, you'll probably get a new batch of gall mites on your plants as soon as someone gives you a new cutting or you buy a new plant". The only realistic non-toxic method of control is learning to cut off the disfigured plant material as soon as you notice it. Then follow-up with some type of nontoxic spray solution to reduce the number of gall mites left on your plant. It's called plant maintenance; it's what gardeners do, right? Simply cut off the visual disfigured plant material and the ugly problem goes away. I think that's worth repeating. *Simply cut off the visual disfigured plant material and the ugly problem goes away.*

I think we can all agree that disfigured plant material is ugly and unpleasant to look at however **you** do not have to leave the ugly on the plant. Is that worth repeating? I think it is. *You do not have to leave the ugly disfigured plant material on the plant.* It's really that simple. Cut the disfigured plant material off as soon as you notice it and if it develops some more disfigured plant material, then cut that off also. Fuchsia enthusiasts should be willing to do a little plant maintenance in exchange for the joy we feel when we see the many beautiful fuchsia flowers the plant will produce during the year. However, if a plant becomes a high maintenance plant then replace the plant just like you would any other plant in your garden.

If you want more background information regarding gall mite control, visit our *American Fuchsia Society website at: <http://www.americanfuchsiasociety.org/articledirectory/>*