

Five Golden Rules
Fuchsia News Autumn 2015
By Carol Gubler

I thought that I would come up with my Five Golden Rules for growing fuchsias in 2016—which should allow all of us to grow better fuchsias!

1. Grow less: this may seem a strange one, but we all have a habit of growing too many plants. At this time of the year if your greenhouse is packed to the gunnels then it doesn't matter too much. However, in the next few months plants have this nasty habit of growing. By the middle of March (or thereabouts), you may find that to even get in past the door that you have to move twenty or more plants. Then you know that you have a problem that is only going to get worse as the plants continue to get larger. The best fuchsia growers do not pack their greenhouses in the winter leaving room for the plants and themselves. Do not take hundreds of cuttings that you don't really need and then do not know what to do with them. However, you could spread the fuchsias and pass some onto a friend.

2. Attention to detail: growing the 'right number' of plants will mean that you can give the plants the attention that they need, when they need it rather than having to do it all in a rush. Even in the winter, plants do need regular checks for watering, leaf drop etc. A regular check will mean that the potential problems of rust, aphids can be kept under observation and dealt with sooner rather than later.

3. Feeding: when plants are growing, they need feeding. Running a nursery, I do tend to have plants everywhere and due to pressures feeding drops down my list of priorities, which is why I love the slow-release fertilizers for the summer. So, it is back to a watering can for feeding once the plants are growing. It is slow and time consuming, but again it gives you the opportunity to look at the plants and to spot any problems before they get too bad. Follow the instructions and your plants will grow all the better!

4. This one is a bit of a contradiction, but even though I have already suggested that you grow less, please go out in the spring and support your local specialist nursery—it really is a case of use them or lose them. They are bound to tempt you to try something that you have never grown before and with all that space you have, you can fill part of it with new cuttings that will give you hours of pleasure in the coming months!

5. Enjoy them: whether you are a new fan of fuchsias or an old hand who has grown them for many years, have fun with your fuchsias. The hours that you spend looking after them during the course of the year will be more than paid back with the hours of pleasure that you will get from them.

So, there you are—hopefully, we will all try and follow the Five Golden Rules. Perhaps it is easier said than done, but yet again I will give it a go!

From: South African Fuchsia Society Fuchsia Fanfare of November 2017