

Basic Fuchsia Culture Calendar  
Part II  
By Rodney Bergquist

**April: Fertilizing, Pinching & Spring Pest Control**

After pruning, the plant will start generating new leaves and new roots. When new growth starts to appear, start a weak fertilizing schedule, maybe  $\frac{1}{4}$  strength of manufacturer recommended dosage for a couple weeks and then increase to  $\frac{1}{2}$  strength every two weeks. **Never fertilize a dry plant.** Some growers use high nitrogen fertilizer to encourage rapid growth while other growers like to use a more balanced fertilizer like 14-14-14. *When the new growth has made two sets of leaves and a tip, pinch out or cut off the tip.* Removing the tip is called pinching. Each time the tip is removed, the plant will send out two additional side shoots which increases the number of branches, which also increases the number of flowers the plant will have. When the side shoots have grown two additional sets of leaves with a tip, again remove that tip. Increasing branches by pinching also creates a bushy plant. Most garden fuchsias are pinched 2-3 times. Make sure you pinch all the way around the plant, so your plant does not end up with a lot of branches & flowers on one side and only a few on the opposite side.

**May: Fertilizing, Blooming**

Fuchsias are considered heavy feeders. **That means your fuchsias must be continuously fertilized if you want your fuchsia to do great.** Most fuchsia growers apply a balanced fertilizer like 14-14-14, half strength, once a week. Never exceed manufacturer recommended dosage because it may be harmful to the plant. Stop pinching after three pinching. Single flower fuchsias will normally bloom in about 6-8 weeks after the last pinch. Double flower fuchsias will bloom about 8-12 weeks after the last pinch. After the flower starts to fade or gets old, remove the flower & the seed pod. Removing the seed pod tells the plant it has not completed its reproduction cycle, so it will make another flower.

**June: Pest Control**

Many fuchsias have their first bloom by the middle of June. Whiteflies are a common pest that is difficult to get rid of. Most insects love the warm weather and continue multiplying throughout the year to ensure their survival. It's important to note, *for the grower, a lack of aggressive pest control in the spring and continuing into the summer months will lead to a disappointing fuchsia season.* Contact a local fuchsia society branch or nursery for recommendations on current products & control methods available in your area. For more fuchsia culture info, visit the American Fuchsia Society (AFS) website: [www.americanfuchsiasociety.org/articledirectory](http://www.americanfuchsiasociety.org/articledirectory) for fuchsia culture articles or click on fuchsia consultant and ask your question.