

Preface

It is not my intention to teach you how to grow fuchsia's, but merely to offer some guidance on the proved and tested methods that I myself have used to educate the next generation of young fuchsia growers.

First of all you need to find a school that can fit you into their curriculum, be prepared to give a short presentation to the teaching staff, showing what items you are going to use and what you expect the children to achieve by you being there.

Children can gain horticulture experience, by taking cuttings, making a simple propagator, mixing compost and understanding its make up, learning how to train a plant in its many different shapes and forms, understanding the likes and dislikes of plants, water, food, light, frost, heat, sun, pests, diseases and the chance to grow a plant and enter the children's section of your Annual Fuchsia Show, gaining a certificate of achievement plus a possible prize or trophy

I would recommend an age limit of 8 & 9 years as the youngest starting point, (year 4 in Junior schools) and that a minimum of one hours duration be given for each visit, allow for 3 visits at 3 weekly intervals. A fourth visit could be arranged with your local Radio, Newspaper or TV Station to help publicise the Fuchsia, School and your Society.

Children at this age are very inquisitive and quick to learn, especial practical skills, what they don't know they will ask, who, when, where, why, what and how. They like to have hands on experience, allow them to handle, feel, touch, smell and see for themselves, they also like surprises, so keep things hidden until required.

The children can also gain new words to spell, simple maths equations i.e. how many rows of cuttings in a tray, how many in each row, how many in the tray, if you sold one row at 3p how much would you have. The points of the compass may be learned for turning the plant a quarter turn each day, new topic to write a story on, to grow plants in the classroom for sale at the school open day or planting in the garden, and an exercise in writing a thank you letter to the visiting speaker.

Your ideas may be endless but the final result is that everyone has learned something, the children the teachers and not forgetting yourself, you will experience a great sense of achievement and a satisfaction the likes of which you have never felt before.

I wish you luck in finding a school and trust you find the following notes and guidance, as a starting point for your presentations in educating the next generation of Young Fuchsia Growers.

♦ **Shaping and Training your Plant**

Decide what shape you want to grow - "Bush"

Start training your plant as soon as rooting has taken place

Show how to remove the growing tip at 3 -4 pairs of leaves

Explain how the side shoots should be trained and when to stop

Give a demonstration and leave the plant with the children for growing on, check on your next visit and give another stopping

♦ **What do we mean by Stopping**

Removing the growing tip of every branch

Every branch should be stopped on the same day for even growth

Stopping promotes bushy growth on any Fuchsia whatever the shape

Demonstrate on a second year plant, bring back on next visit

♦ **Growing a Standard Fuchsia**

Select a straight growing rooted cutting (whip), pass around the group.

Insert a split cane and secure around the Fuchsia stem with a piece of plastic, stapled in position.

Remove any side shoots, like a Tomato Plant.

Keep growing on and up until the required height is achieved, leaving the top three sets of side shoots in place remove the growing tip.

Do not let the plant become pot bound, pot on at regular intervals.

Demonstrate and leave the whip with the children, encourage them to place further strips of plastic around the cane as the plant grows.

Show an established Standard, explain the different sizes they can be.

♦ **Growing a Loop from a Fuchsia Cutting**

Have a prepared cutting that has been stopped at one pair of leaves or

use two fuchsia whips, and demonstrate how to train them around a wire loop, securing them in place with plastic strips and stapler about

every other pair of leaves. Explain the stopping procedure, stop all side shoots at every pair of leaves until the required shape is required, allow

the main shoots to pass each other at the top of the loop by about 6cm.

A wire coat hanger, temporary held in place by two canes will suffice.