

# HAVEN NURSERIES LTD

Crab Lane, Bobbington, Stourbridge, West Midlands DY7 5DZ

Tel 01384 221543. Fax 01384 221320.

[www.havennurseries.co.uk](http://www.havennurseries.co.uk)

## OVERWINTERING FUCHSIAS

Non hardy fuchsias need to be given frost protection during the winter no matter how they are grown during the summer. Hardy varieties grown in pots, also need frost protection as otherwise the valuable root system will die off. Lift plants from borders, before the first frosts of winter, and put the root ball into the smallest possible pot. Reduce all the plants to one third of their summer size, this will mean that you can store them more easily and by cutting back hard will give you more vigorous growth the next spring.

Fuchsias are naturally deciduous and to reduce the possibility of harbouring any pests and diseases we recommend that you remove as many of the old leaves as possible. They will fall off anyway over the winter and leaf litter in the greenhouse is an ideal breeding ground for disease.

There are a number of ways to provide a frost free environment:

1) A heated greenhouse or conservatory is the easiest answer, in fact if you can keep it at a minimum of 5°C the plants will keep ticking over during the winter, giving you a bigger plant with flowers earlier in the season this is called growing by the biennial method.

2) An unheated greenhouse, shed or garage. In this environment the plants will be kept just above freezing and will go into a much deeper dormancy. This will mean that a lack of light will not be a problem, but you will need to let the plants dry out much more, however don't let them go completely crispy dry. Also if a very hard frost is expected it would be advisable to give the plants an extra degree of protection - horticultural fleece is the most common form of protection keeping plants up to 3 degrees warmer.

3) 'Laying down' is a very traditional way of seeing fuchsias through the winter. Dig a large pit in an area of the garden where the ground will not become waterlogged, line the pit with a thick layer of straw or newspaper. Plants can be cut back hard and laid one on top of the other. Another layer of straw, and then backfill to give a minimum of a 6" depth of soil. Lift the plants from the pit, cut back hard to promote stronger growth.

Keeping a Hardy fuchsia outside in winter.

It is the root-ball of the fuchsia which is hardy, only when planted in the ground. The frost can attack the plant if left in a pot & it could die, so hardy varieties left in pots should be treated as though they are tender. Hardy fuchsias should be grown on to a reasonable size before planting out & need to be established ideally at least 2 months before the first frosts are expected, to come through the winter. In the first winter we recommend that you mulch over & around the base of the plant, with bark or peat to allow protection. In spring, once the first frosts have passed cut back the dead wood hard to 4" above ground