

# 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)

## PESTS AND DISEASES & HOW TO COMBAT THEM.

Fortunately there are not many pests and diseases which attack fuchsias. The important thing here is acting as soon as you spot a problem and don't let it escalate.

**Whitefly** - Probably the commonest problem to fuchsias. If you have seen one whitefly assume there are more and act quickly - they can multiply with extraordinary speed.

Wet sprays can be used when there are no flowers on the plants. Any proprietary whitefly spray used at the correct dilution should be effective, but do check the label to ensure it is safe to use for fuchsias. The only downside to spraying is that it will only kill the adult whitefly and therefore regular sprays at intervals of 3 - 4 days will be necessary until the risk has been diminished. If the plants are heavily in bud or flower then wet spraying will mark the flowers. Then use a fumigation product, these tend to be more expensive and again will only kill the adults so you will have to carry out the treatment more than once. A preventative form of treatment can be the use of the insecticide Provado. This breaks the life cycle of the whitefly and therefore one dose early in the season when the plants are growing vigorously usually provides season long protection.

**Red Spider Mite** - Not really a spider, but one of the worst pests to attack fuchsias. The main problem is they are virtually impossible to detect until a problem develops.

Symptoms are leaves turning bronzy and very brittle. Once this happens, isolate the infected plant as red spider can spread with remarkable speed. Pick off all the leaves & burn them - do not compost them. Treat the plant with a good proprietary spray and leave isolated until fresh growth returns and it is clearly over the attack. After an attack all the plants in the greenhouse should be sprayed as a preventative measure, but again take care if heavily in flower as it can cause marking. Red spider mite thrives best in very hot dry conditions, keeping the humidity up in your greenhouse should offer some protection.

**Vine Weevil** - Probably the most publicised fuchsia pest at present. Early symptoms are notches appearing on the leaves; later symptoms are apparently healthy plants just keeling over, due to the root system having been eaten by the larval grubs. Provado provides an answer to this problem. It is one which can be used as a drench through the compost in pots. This sterilises any eggs that may have been laid.

If you suspect vine weevil presence check each pot carefully. Knock the pot off gently and the grubs can usually be seen in the compost at the side of the rootball. Remove and crush the grub and drench the pot with Provado which is available here.

**Rust** - This disease will not cause the death of a plant, it is disfiguring & extremely contagious. The first sign noticed is often a yellowing patch on the upper surface of the leaf. On turning the leaf over bright orange spores are present. Remove all infected leaves very carefully. The spores spread in the air so careful removal will go a long way to prevent spreading. Burn the leaves, do not compost them as the spores can live in the compost and remain dormant for some time. Scrape off the top surface and replace with fresh compost.

Spraying with a reliable fungicide is the only option. Regular spraying early in the season will provide protection throughout the summer. Rust thrives where there is poor air circulation, if you experience difficulties in getting this problem under control you may have to temporarily thin out your fuchsia collection until the rust is eradicated. Many of the trusted favourites in the fight with rust have been removed from the shelves. However, we have received reports from a number of our customers that Fungus Fighter, a new organic spray, is proving to be very effective.

**Botrytis** - Sometimes known as 'damping off' this disease is characterised by grey mould. Overcrowding, over watering, poor air circulation or leaving old leaf litter lying around, are all factors. The plant is literally rotting away. Addressing all of the above problems will usually cure it. In severe cases a dose of fungicide will help.

**Yellowing leaves** - Not really a disease at all, it can be caused by simple old age, over watering or underfeeding. The latter two can easily be remedied. If it is old age, take cuttings to rejuvenate stock and throw the old plant away.