

Fuchsia News July 2021

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I don't know where this year is going but I know that we are rushing through it at breakneck speed!!

Arthur's Articles!

Silver Surfer:

We brought *Silver Surfer* to the US to add to the collection we, that is my Sister in Law, Nancy and myself's growing collection of fuchsias in the spring of 2020 (just as the pandemic broke).

It grew on and although a small plant started to bloom in the Autumn, and it continued to grow and bloom all through the winter in a unheated greenhouse. It is now outside and still blooming well, although not a "Show Plant" it is a very respectable plant, taking into consideration that it has not rested through the winter. Who says fuchsias require tender loving care!??

Different Cultivars:

During our recent visit to the Pacific Northwest, we came across several different cultivars. The first that caught our attention was a different version of *Firecracker*. This cultivar had very dark green foliage with just a very faint silver stripe. Although it was a *Triphylla* with a slight variegation, I would question if indeed it was *Firecracker*. It certainly was nowhere as attractive as the version we are all familiar with in the UK. I was very tempted to purchase a plant - but the price put me off and we never returned to the nursery.

A second plant which we encountered, and we have no idea where we obtained it is a long tube lax bush named *Pour le Menneke*. To sate our curiosity Nancy researched this on the internet. *Pour le Menneke* apparently translates to mean "for the Man" and is Dutch raised by Hendriks's plant nursery. We still do not know how it found its way into our American collection, with think from last Springs GSFS plant sale, but they purchased their sale plants from Earth Works Nursery and they do not list *Pour le Menke*. So, the mystery remains. A good cultivar for either the "Catch All Class" or the not on the "Triphylla type Class". We also acquired a cultivar, *Jenny May*. When we researched that, we found it was hybridized by our own Keith Bush from Bristol. It seems it is very popular in the Northwest USA!

I reckon that it was imported via Hendricks Young Plants who sell fuchsias everywhere! However, looking at Fuchsiafinder the name seems to be Poermenneke and there are references to a statue of a man fishing for eels!!

Affiliated Societies:

Due to the Pandemic, a number of affiliated have not been able to meet since the early Spring of 2020, and a fair number have not been able to keep in touch apart from occasional newsletters that have been produced and so many things have been left to lie dormant. Some have kept in touch using one of the media platforms available. This is the only way that the BFS Committee has been able to keep the society running is by using ZOOM both for the Committee meetings and the Annual General Meeting.

I have been contacted by a member of one society, where an officer has tried to close the society down, because the Bank is closing the account because there has been no activity on the account for twelve months. So, a warning. If you have not used the society account in that time, get your treasurer to pop along and deposit a pound periodically, until the society starts to function again.

My advice to the person who contacted me. Contact as many members as you can either by telephone or try to arrange a meeting of members at a venue outside (I suggested the usual meeting venue car Park) and if enough members wish the society to continue then they the members must take it from there. If enough wish to continue then I have offered whatever help or advice needed.

The question also arose what to do with the funds the society holds, this society is reasonably wealthy. I advised them that the British Fuchsia Society has scheme where a society closes down the money is paid into a holding account and should anyone in the area wish to start a fuchsia society then the money would be returned to restart the society. After a period, no one comes forward then the monies transfer the BFS main account.

If anyone in an Affiliated Society feels they need any help or advice in these uncertain times, then the British Fuchsia Society is here to help in any way they can especially those of us on the Affiliated Society Sub-Committee (CADS).

More about Affiliated Societies later!

Abandoned Fuchsias!

We were in the US for a little under five weeks and that is a long time to leave the fuchsias, especially in mid-summer. We have never left them for so long so I was a little apprehensive on how they would fare with only the automatic watering system to keep them alive. The system or should I say systems work on timers. The timers are set to give the greenhouse 20 minutes in early morning (7am) and the shade house and outside plants getting 20 minutes twice a day (6am & 3pm). The 3pm being an afterthought as the days before we left were exceedingly hot in the afternoon and some fuchsias were drying out.

When we arrived home Wednesday 7th July. The green house and shade house were a jungle. I have never seen fuchsias put on so much growth in such a short space of time. As I write this article, I still have not got to the back shelf in the greenhouse where I notice a couple of fuchsias are looking decidedly un-well. This shelf is pretty high to the glass and despite the shade cloth would get pretty hot. It is only watered from one reservoir which in itself is only fed by a dripper from the watering system



A jungle in the shade house

The fuchsias that I have been able to work through have come through the experience very well. There are small amounts of old Botrytis, mainly dried out although in some cases taken a small branch or two. But with my intended show/display plants that I have managed to reach, I am quite satisfied and relieved that the watering system did its job. Who says fuchsias need tender loving care!

Thanks, Arthur, for your articles from both sides of the Atlantic!!

What's on and What's Not etc!

I promised more news earlier and somethings are happening, and others have had to be cancelled! So here are some snippets!

- The BFS Eastern Show took place on Sunday 4th July the same day as the football and Wimbledon finals! It was possibly the first show to be held entirely outdoors (whatever the weather!) It might not have been the biggest fuchsia show ever, but it was one of the happiest with everyone being able to meet up (socially distanced) with friends that they might not have seen for 2 years!



June and I were doing the paperwork in the rain – one wrote whilst the other held the umbrella etc! It certainly focused the judges' minds!!

- Since then, Dovercourt Fuchsia Society have held a weekend display, following on from their fish and chip supper – they are lucky to have a really large hall! I know that other Societies have plans in place for shows and meetings. I am hosting two different groups in my garden next week as neither can use their hall at the moment!
- Other groups have found it much harder to get started again but on an intersociety Zoom call for the Eastern area the other week all of the groups are planning some kind of get together for September or earlier
- I fear, like Arthur, that this will be the finish of quite a number of groups who were previously hanging on, but we shall have to wait and see. If any of the Committee can help at any time – please just ask!
- As I type this as far as we know all the BFS Shows will take place, however regulations can change very quickly!! So please if you are thinking of going to any of them look on the website or Facebook for up-to-date information. The most doubt has to be with the Scottish show that is normally held in a school.
- The Malvern Show has been extended by a day so it is now 24th – 26th September. Harrogate Show is 17th – 19th September at the moment all we can offer is a draft schedule as we are waiting for the Northern Horticultural Society to finalise details!
- If your Society has an event planned, then just let me know and I will do my best to put it onto the Facebook pages etc!

Finally for this section a few pictures of the BFS Eastern Show! My thanks to Don Harris and John Nicholass for the photos



During judging



Cyril Philpott with his Mini standard of Ann Reid (B in S)



Some of the classes

Looking back – like every editor there are times when you look back at previous editions for useful articles!

Coping with the heat – John Nicholass

During the last two years, heat has been the least of our problems, with plants drowning in the continuous rain and fiercely attacked by fuchsia rust being a more likely problem. However, as I write this the last two weeks have been exceedingly hot! Even here in the West Country, the temperatures have reached 30°C and over in the southeast it has been even hotter. When we get this kind of weather at this time of year the conditions last a long time as the day length is nearly at its maximum, giving little respite from the conditions. I don't know if you like me have had one or two plants succumb to the heat. You know the symptoms! The plant rootball is still quite moist (well dripping actually) but the plant looks very sad with the sepals and leaves drooping and the leaves looking rather dull. Probably the sun has cooked the roots and the only thing to do is put the plant into a shady place, then see if it will recover! If it doesn't pick up in a week or so then cut it back and see if it will shoot again. Perhaps it is a good time to think about the measures that you can take to protect the plants as much as possible in these conditions.

Plants in the Greenhouse

They shouldn't be there! Get them outside! However, if like me you have run out of suitable outside spaces because you broke rule number one (Don't grow too many plants!) then attempt to moderate the greenhouse conditions as much as possible.

1. Plenty of shading! The white stuff such as coolglass painted on the outside does a good job. If you use net shading, make sure it is on the outside of the glass preferably with an air gap inbetween. If it is inside the glass, the heat is already inside the greenhouse defeating the object. A deciduous tree, which is late to come into leaf, such as a beech, is also an added bonus, shading the greenhouse in the summer months, but allowing plenty of light in the spring.
2. Maximum ventilation! If you do not have enough ventilation, remove some glass from the apex at the opposite end to the door(s) and replace with netting
3. Humidity! Wet the floor frequently with water. This both increases the humidity and helps to cool the greenhouse by evaporation of water. Similarly put sand and chippings on the staging trays and keep them wet, watering to approximately half the depth of the sand chipping, so the pots do not take it up. For those of you with a scientific bent one kilogram of water needs around 2,400kJ of energy to evaporate it at 30°C.
4. Watering. Water the plants first thing in the morning or last thing at night depending on your preference. Avoid watering in the middle of the day. If a plant is flagging, check the rootball is dry before watering it. If it isn't move the plants somewhere cooler.

Plants in the shade house

If you are lucky enough to have one of these, they are ideal for the conditions we have had recently. Plenty of ventilation through the shade net, breaking up large droplets of water from any thundershowers and humidity from the wet floor. The main additional bonus is they protect the flowers from the attention of the bees and their big feet!

Plants outside.

The ideal position is by an unobstructed white painted north-facing wall, so at this time of the year the plants will get sun from the east in the morning, and again from the west in the evening but be shaded from the sun in the hottest parts of the day. One of the important things to do is ensure the pots are supported in some way to prevent plants being blown over in the wind.

1. Double Potting:- This method consists of putting a standard plant pot inside a growers pot, and infilling the gap between with sharp sand. It may be necessary to fill the bottom part with course chippings to prevent the sharp sand escaping through the holes in the growers pot. I use a 2lt pot for a 3½" pot, a 4lt pot for a 5" pot and a 5lt pot for a 6" pot. The sharp sand is kept wet and the plant inside its pot dropped into the inner pot. Make sure you use the same make and type of pot for the inner pot and the plant pot so it will fit inside snugly. The damp sand helps to cool the roots and insulates the inner pot from the sun. It will prevent the pot blowing over in all but the stormiest conditions. Plants treated like this can be placed in sunnier areas and some cultivars such as Cambridge Louie really benefit from this, the growth becoming much harder and less prone to flop and collapse without support. Beware though, in windy warm conditions they dry out very quickly. It is important when turning the plants to lift the plant pot out from the inner double pot as this breaks any feeder roots coming from the bottom of the plant pot. If you don't do this roots will go out into the sharp sand and even if you can get it out, cutting these roots at a late stage means the plant will probably wilt quite quickly.

2. Cement Ring Stands: These are round stands moulded out of Mortar (6:1 Builders sand to cement) approx 1/3 the pot height and 1.5 to 2 times the pot diameter. Many exhibitors also use these to keep plants upright when transporting them, but the need to be on a surface they will not slip on, such as carpet.
3. Canes. If growing on grass, split canes pushed into the turf around the pot are excellent for keeping them upright. The plants also benefit from the humidity from the grass. Unfortunately, it ruins the lawn so your other half may not allow it!!

Fuchsias in Kauai:

During our recent trip to the island of Kauai in Hawaii, we had been told to look out for *F. boliviana* on the entrance to the State Park at Waimea Canyon. Not being absolutely sure where this was, we kept a look out all through our trip through Waimea Canyon without spotting anything. Then at the end of the canyon and entering Kokee State Park at the head of the canyon, we caught our first sight of one bush at the side of the road.

We were lucky in finding a suitable place to stop without blocking the narrow winding road so that we could get out of the car with cameras to photograph this bush. But once we had stopped and had got out of the car, we soon realised that there were bushes of *F. boliviana* on both sides of the road we were travelling on plus some around the junction. As we were photographing these bushes full of beautiful red flowers, we were sure that people in passing cars were wondering why we were paying so much attention to road side flora, when we had the beauty of the Waimea Canyon around.

With photographs taken we were back in the car thinking how lucky we were to be able to spot these two or three large clumps of fuchsia growing quite happily in the wild. But as we drove on, we realised that what we had spotted were not isolated clumps, because *F. boliviana* was growing on both sides of the road for about half a mile, much to our delight and at the expense of several more photographs.

These plants were growing quite happily at around 3,500 to 4,000 feet above sea level in a moderate temperature. It was around 76d F when we were there mid October and with a quite high rainfall with high levels of mist and fog dependent on wind direction. They were growing in large clumps pretty close together in amongst other shrubs and appearing to be quite happy.

At Kokee state Park there is a Museum of the History of the Park, its flora and fauna and natural history. So, we thought we would enquire about how *F. boliviana* came to be there. The Lady told us that they were native to the Island and became very brusque and off hand when we told her that they were not native to the Island. To the extent of actually walking away from us. So we carried on looking at the museums displays and information, purchasing some post cards to remember the visit. When going to pay for the purchases the Lady said that after talking to us, she had been looking in her reference books and she could not find any reference to *F. boliviana*. We then explained that as the name suggested it was native to Bolivia explaining that we were both members of the BFS and knew a little about fuchsias.

We in fact found reference to *F. magellanica* in some books and later during the visit saw a bush of it obviously planted, by some toilets further up the park. Again, growing quite happily.

Later in our visit we visited the McBryde Tropical Botanical Gardens and asked there about our find of *F. boliviana*. To be told it had been introduced to the Island in the early 1900's along with other plants and had indeed gone native, quite liking the conditions. Which we could quite understand, as we liked it too!

Growing Shapes! From 2012!

Growing Pillars, Conicals and Pyramids – John Nichollass

I had an email from Ron Payne forwarded to me by Carol which came in as an enquiry to the BFS website about growing Pillars and Pyramids. I thought this might make a good article for Fuchsia News so here goes!

The first important thing is to consider the differences between the forms of training.

A Pillar is a tall vertical structure with no taper (i.e. no change in circumference) from top to bottom.

A Conical is a tall vertical structure with a gradual taper from the top to the bottom which resembles a tall tapering tree.

A Pyramid is a tapering shape which is proportionally much wider at the base than a Conical. Note that the BFS show definition states it should be 3 or 4 sided and can be grown over a supporting frame, although most of the older descriptions indicate they were grown as tapering cylinders

For all of these structures when grown in a large size a vigorously grown upright cultivar is needed though an element of wiriness or slight laxness is also desirable

All of the structures can be grown in a variety of overall heights starting from the small pot culture sizes of typically 1½ to 2½ ft in a 5" (13cm) pot, up to the monsters that James Lye/George Bright and more recently Ray Pratt of Devon used to grow reach up to 10ft in height. Before getting too carried away you need to think that ideally, they should be kept in green leaf over the winter which means for me a maximum of 6ft in the winter to fit them in the greenhouse. It also might be necessary to lie or

suspend them horizontally, turning them in the plane of the main stem in the early part of the year to boost the sap flow to the lower branches!

Before I give a brief description of each method of growth below is a list of references where you can read a bit more about the principles:

Growing Fuchsias- K Jennings & V Miller; p80-90
Fuchsias the complete guide- Edwin Goulding p50-52
The Fuchsia Growers Handbook- Ron Ewart p49-51
A Fuchsia Survey- W P Wood p91-97 (Cordons= Pillars)
Fuchsias for the Greenhouse and Garden- David Clark p53-57
Lovely Fuchsias- A G Puttock p 75-77
Gardener's Guide to Fuchsias- John Nicholass p128-129
Exhibitors, Judges and Stewards Rulebook & Guidelines Issued 2013

The Pillar (Also known as a Cordon in earlier years)

The Pillar can be grown as a single stemmed plant, a single plant grown with twin stems or a multi-plant from two or more plants. For a single stemmed plant, the most important point is to keep the plant growing as quickly as possible by potting on before the roots start to coil around the bottom of the pot and feeding with a high nitrogen feed. A strong growing 2 or 3 leaf cutting should be trained up a cane placed close to the stem and the first one or two sets of side-shoots removed to give a clear stem. From then on, the side-shoots should be stopped quite frequently to boost the upright growth and the stem tied into the cane. It will also be necessary to stop the side shoots harder at the base of the plant and progressively less as you go further up the plant to attain the shape without a taper, though this will depend on the cultivar. You are aiming for overall proportions of 1:4 to 5 ratio of diameter to height; hence a 5 foot specimen should be around 12 to 15 inches in diameter when in full flower. For the twin stem single plant approach a two-leaf cutting must be used and this is grown to approx. 3 pairs of leaves before the growing tip is removed. The top two side-shoots are retained, and the others removed. One of the two resultant stems is trained as a stretched cylindrical bush to form the lower part of the structure, while the other stem is initially trained as a standard, removing all but the top 3 sets of side-shoots. At approx. half the overall height the stem is then grown on as a stretched cylindrical standard head to form the top of the plant. Both stems need to be tied in tightly to a central cane to give the final impression of a single structure.

Finally for the multi-plant technique two or possibly better three cuttings need to be grown up around a central stem in a similar way to the single plant option, though it will probably be necessary to remove many of the inward growing leaves and side-shoots to prevent botrytis in the centre of the plant.

The Conical

This is somewhere intermediate in growth between a Pillar and a Pyramid. It can be grown from multiple plants or a single plant structure and trained in a similar way to the pillar except it has a distinct taper from the top to the bottom. For this reason, the stopping of the side-shoots is aimed at realising this profile. Personally, I prefer to grow these in the same way as a pyramid, but with longer gaps between the stopping of the main stem so for a 5ft Conical I would stop the main stem at every 14 to 18" depending on the habit of growth of the cultivar. See below for a more detailed description

The Pyramid

The Pyramid has a much wider base to the plant than a conical. You are aiming for a 2 to 3 base diameter to height ratio. Additionally, to comply with the BFS exhibitors guide it should have four triangular sides on a square base and a framework is allowed. The structure can be grown from a single or multiple plants, but the important point is the regular stopping of the main stem to drive the growth of the side shoots and branches. I will describe the technique for the single plant, but similar principles apply to the multi-plant structure. Start with a two leaf cutting of a vigorous growing cultivar. You can use a three leaf but it will probably revert to a two leaf after the first stop so there is not much of a gain from it. Again, it is very important to grow the plant on without check and potting on before the roots have curled around the bottom of the pot. Grow the plant up a cane and remove the first set only of side shoots to give a short clear stem at the base. When the central stem reaches approx. 9" remove the growing tip and access the two resultant side-shoots. Remove the weaker of the two and grow the other on up the cane as the new leader. Tie the stem into the supporting cane whenever necessary. When the new leader has made 3-4" of growth, stop all of the side-shoots at three pairs of leaves at the base of the plant and two pairs of leaves near the first main stem stop. When the leader has reached approx. 18" again remove the growing tip, so the new resulting set of side-shoots will grow in the same plane as the first stop when looking at the plant from above. This time, remove the resulting side shoot so the new leader is growing on the opposite side to the leader after the first stop. Again, when the new leader has made 3-4" of growth, stop all of the side-shoots to build up the desired shape. This alternate stopping gives alternate boosts to the upwards and outward

growth. When the plant has reached approx. half the desired height, if the cane is not tall enough it should be changed carefully to a strong cane of the correct height. Carry on the alternate stopping according to the size you want, but if you wish to exhibit it at BFS shows, then you need to look at the plant and decide where you want to create the four triangular sides, then stop the side-shoots harder in the middle (every pair of leaves and allow more growth on the edges (2-3 pairs of leaves). Grow the plant on until it is close to the desired height then stop any further potting on, give it a final stop and allow it to flower.

With all of these structures a high nitrogen feed should be used in the first part of training when the height of the plant is grown. Later switch to a balanced feed. The trickiest thing is hardening up the growth which means growing the plant on outside. Ensure the central stem is well tied to the cane, ensure the pot is well anchored and with larger structures tie the top of the cane to an overhead support such as a tree branch to stop it blowing over. Try to make sure it is in a sheltered position as wind combined with rain can result in branches being broken off before they have gained woodiness. These plants are best kept in green leaf in the winter so they should be pruned back to shape in late August/early September to allow the plants to come into green leaf again before the winter.

My Attempts at growing a Pyramid – Arthur Phillips

Sometime last year I thought that I would like to try growing a fuchsia Pyramid. To that aim I searched for some information to give me a start, only to no avail. I mentioned this in my regular articles for the Northwest Fuchsia societies *Fuchsia Flash*. Janis Berquist from Crescent City California sent me an extract from a British book she had on growing a Pyramid using a single plant. By this time, I had decided to go it alone and try my luck using four plants (one for each face), I wrote back to Janis telling her this, and she wrote back suggesting I write a regular diary of my progress for the *Flash*. This I have been doing on a bi-monthly basis. The plants are now looking somewhat like a Pyramid now, so I thought that I might share my progress with you by repeating all of my efforts as I wrote them.

Diary of growing a Fuchsia Pyramid:

Vol 1 After searching many books we could find nothing on how to grow a fuchsia pyramid so we have started by trial and error. And concluded that the best way to start was to grow four identical plants individually until such time as it would be decided that they would be potted into what would be the final pot.

May 15th we purchased four young plants of "*Swingtime*" selecting four bushy plants as near as possible all of the same size. But one is slightly smaller than others. These plants were all housed together in our shade house on the floor, (there is no room anywhere else) and fed each day with a high nitrogen liquid feed at approximately 1/7th strength for one week. These were then left to their own devices while we visited the USA for four weeks, being cared for by the automatic watering system, and getting no feed during that period.

June 25th we potted all four plants from the 2inchth containers they were grown in, into 3inch square pots, using a potting mix that contains feed. The feeding regime resumed.

July 5th they were all potted on into 5inch pots using the same potting mix with feed. Again, getting their daily liquid feed. They were still living on the shade house floor but in more cramped conditions as all the plants were growing so well.

July 15th they were all potted on into 6inch half pots, using the same potting mix, they were by this time putting on a considerable amount of growth. Room was getting by now quite cramped and several plants had started to grow into one another, but the "*Swingtimes*" were given sufficient room to grow. At this time, we were going off to Switzerland, so they would be left in the care of the automatic watering system for ten days with no supplemental feeding.

July 27th they were all potted back into the 6inch half pots with approximately ½ inch of compost being taken from the bottom and all around the sides. This space was filled with new potting mix. This allows new root growth without increasing the pot size.

August 1st each plant was tied to its first framework, so that they could be grown on *espalier* fashion. This took a considerable amount of time fitting the framework to make the best use of the considerable growth that each plant had made. As the branches were brought into the desired shape, the unusable growth was cut out, and with considerable tying and untying, so that branches could be fed into place, this was minimal. At the same time side shoots were stopped in the hope that laterals would form to start in filling the spaces, as well as encouraging the unstopped branches to make more longitudinal growth. Also, some of the side shoots that would be at the back of the frame were also removed on the basis that they would not contribute to the shaping of the *espalier*.

August 8th -12th. During this week, a considerable amount of time (around 45minutes a plant) has been spent inserting canes and tying branches to train the required shape! As well as stopping and removing side shoots that did not appear to be of benefit to the shaping of the plant. At this moment, the growth is moving on quite nicely.

September 9th the four *Swingtimes* are now starting to get away from me and need urgent attention, as we will be in the Pacific Northwest for two weeks from the 28th September; I am thinking I will start drying them out to over winter instead of keeping them in green growth. I will add more on this later.

Vol 2. The plants had all started to bloom and as such once in flowering mode, no more vegetative growth is possible, so I was faced with no alternative but to withdraw the watering and let the plants dry out. As I write this on 4th November. The plants have each been pruned back to a basic framework of woody growth and I am beginning to bring each plant back into growth with the aim of continuing with fresh growth from that frame. Although disappointed in not being able to keep them in green growth as intended, it is perhaps a good thing that I have resorted to a woody frame, because the weight of *Swingtime*. Blooms when grown as a basket is known to break the plant on green growth.

Vol 3. At this moment, the plants that I have cut back are just coming back into growth and making slow progress due to the short-day length. They are being fed on a weak high nitrogen feed to encourage the new growth on a weekly basis. The old wood and new growth are being misted on a daily basis (dependent on the weather conditions) with either “Wonder Grow” or weak high nitrogen. I tend not to foliar feed if the outside weather is of high moisture content or raining, as in these conditions the foliage does not dry by night fall and leads to the risk of botrytis. Around this time, I had been having heater problems and one of the plants has suffered partial frost burn. It has not affected all of the new growth on the plant, and although it was third from the far end of the greenhouse, with all of the plants in line against the side wall of the greenhouse, this was the only one affected.

Vol 4. The plants that I have cut back are now coming back into growth and making good progress. The short day lengths are now increasing nicely. They are still being fed on a weak high nitrogen feed to encourage the growth on a weekly basis. This growth is now getting to the point when some training needs to be carried out with the new growth that is going to the back being pinched out to lateral growth and help thicken up the plants. The forward facing growth needs to be pinched to assist with the forming of the desired fan shape. The plants are also still in the same pots and compost that they were in when put to rest. The plants will therefore need to be removed from the pots and the root ball having about one inch removed from the base and about half an inch from all around the sides. This I do using an old carving knife (borrowed from the kitchen). Then fresh compost (potting mix) being added to the base of the pot (approximately half an inch) the plant being put back in the pot and fresh compost worked around the sides and over the top of the root ball, this lowers the centre of gravity of the plant and allows basal growth. Basal growth being usually very strong and useful to keep the bottom of the plant covered with fresh growth. The compost being over the top of the root ball allows the nutrients in the fresh compost to go down into the roots when watering. I am saying this is what needs to be done, because I am writing this while in the Pacific Northwest for three weeks and there is work to be done when I get back home, along with a million other jobs in the green house.

Vol 5 All of the plants are now making rapid growth. Between the last volumes of the diary, the plants have required tying in several times and new canes have been added to the supporting framework. Some growth that has been growing through the back of the frame has been taken out completely and growth coming to the front has been stopped to encourage lateral growth. Upward growth has been let go unchecked at this time, but some of the lateral growth has been stopped to assist in encouraging the required shape. At the end of April root pruning was carried out to encourage more top growth by stimulating root growth, as the plants are being restricted to the same pots as they were in during the fall. Consideration is now being given to trying to set all four plants into one pot, but at the time of writing, space to house the combined planting is the major consideration, but by the time of the next volume of the diary, I hope to report that this has taken place and the four individual plants are growing as one.

Vol 6 All four plants have now been planted into one large pot (a square pot approximately 15inches across). When the plants had been put into this pot, I found that I had allowed the plants to grow too wide and considerable pruning had to be done to keep the base within the confines of the pot. Also, several sessions of pruning and tying in of the four plants to achieve the required pyramid shape have taken place. The whole effect is now looking very much like a **Pyramid**. I will probably let a little more vertical growth take place to give a little more proportion to the shape. Hopefully It might have reached the desired shape to allow me, if it blooms, to use it on fuchsia friends stand at the end of September.

I wonder if he did!!

It was quite a coincidence that both Arthur and John produced an article along a similar theme!

Best Wishes and Keep Safe!

Carol, Arthur and John

