

Fuchsia News Spring 2022

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Dear All

As usual a few notes before we start!

- As ever, please feel free to use any article etc from any edition of Fuchsia News – they are there for your newsletters etc.
- A quick reminder – Affiliation fees are due £16 please! Most Societies are paid up to date but if not, please can you send me the order for show awards by the end of June – so that it is not too much of a rush
- Please don't forget to check on your Society details on the BFS website, I do try and keep it up to date as much as possible, but it does need your input! Let me know and I will update your entry.
- Show details - please email me details of your show if you would like them to go in the Late June /early July edition
- We need your help now – it is 10 years since we had a **new badge** design, which will be used not only as a badge, but also the logo for Festival of Fuchsias 2022. Please send your thoughts and designs either by email or post to me by mid June!

Top Ten 2022

It is that time of the year again and I do need your help!

A special request to all show managers. Please can you send me the results of the 3.5" and 4", 5", 6.5" or the metric equivalent, and any size pot classes. Listing, if possible, the cultivars that came first, second and third - it helps with my points system. Also, I would like, if possible, the results of the basket, half basket and hanging pot classes.

I really appreciate that it makes a lot of extra work on show day there is always such a lot of interest in the final results. I do hope that you can help - please can you send me your results by the end of September. My address is at the top of this publication or why not email it to me. Also if you want to tell us all a little bit about your show then please feel free!

Are you trying anything new for your show this year – a new venue or format or are you trying a display this year – we would all love to know?

Festival of Fuchsias

2023 will be the 85th year of the BFS and we will be celebrating it in style!!

Where - as part of the Malvern Autumn Show in the Harvest Pavilion. The already large pavilion will be expanded in 2023 so that it can accommodate not only the usual (including our own) shows, but also our "Festival of Fuchsias"

When – 22nd to 24th September

What – We are only at the early stages of planning at the moment, however there will be a combination of displays both educational and full of flowers, mini talks and demonstrations. On the Friday and Saturday evenings we are planning on having special guest speakers as well as a meal. We will be able to give more information as time progresses!

Can I get involved?! – A resounding yes!!

Displays – we are hoping that both groups and individuals will put on stands – **if you are interested in knowing more** – please contact me. (carol.gubler@outlook.com) Each stand will get 6 tickets to the show each day

Talks, demonstrations and being part of the team – we will be needing help on all of these – again please get in touch – we might not have a job for our immediately, but we will need you!

Visiting the event – as it is part of the show (which is vast!). We will be subsidising entry for BFS members to the show (a one day ticket) – again more details nearer the time.

We look forward to seeing you there!!

We are really hoping that you would like to get involved and we are taking this opportunity to get you up to date with the plans so far and to see if you would like to get involved in this one-off celebration at a fantastic event!

In this Fuchsia News you will find the following

- Application form (don't panic – if things change then that will be fine)
- What is available – tables, electricity etc.

There will be lots more updates as we progress!

Please can you get the application form back to me (carol.gubler@outlook.com) as soon as you can, although we do appreciate that so much can change in the next year or so! However, please try and have a chat with the rest of your committee and then let me know if you would like to come! Even if you are unable to put on stand then perhaps you or some of your members could get involved as a helper that weekend! The form will be at the end of this Fuchsia News!

Anyway, I do hope that you will make the most of this opportunity and come and join us at the Malvern Autumn Show We look forward to hearing from you!!

Arthur's Articles

Growing A Pyramid:

Several years ago, I decided I would try growing a pyramid. I elected to grow four plants one for each face. The fuchsia selected was Swingtime. I decided to grow them on biennially in pots the first year. Well, the idea was good, but the reality was not. I had allowed to much lateral growth.

The pot I selected to grow the structure in was a sixteen-inch square pot. After I had made my pyramid structure and come to plant up my four Swingtime, I found that the lateral growth on each plant way exceeded both the base of the structure and the pot. The only answer was to prune of the excess lateral growth, this was done and the fuchsias duly planted, one in the center of each face, fine so far but I had wasted quite a bit of time plus considerable wasted growth.

The plants grew on and tying in was quite a chore, especially trying to get nice sharp corners, which I never truly managed. My next big challenge was trying to overwinter this large structure. The canes made the structure five foot! Along with Nancy's Whighnights Pearl spiral at six foot It was a very tight thing in the greenhouse, but somehow it was managed! I kept the pyramid in green growth all through the first winter and tying in was certainly a chore.

In the second summer the growth was good, and it came into bloom enough to be used on displays at Malvern, but I was very disappointed in the small amount of flower it actually produced, this I put down to the plants efforts in making growth, because I had only been feeding with nitrogen.

I overwintered it again, but rested the plants this time, praying I would be able to bring it back into growth. Much to my relief, growth game back and the structure was coved with nice even growth and with a little inventive tying in, al the bare spots were covered, this summer I fed high potash feed. I did not try to repot the structure but just top dressed with some fresh compost. Again, though despite all my best efforts the blooms were rather sparse, but again it was used at Malvern on displays only.

After that the whole thing was broken up as the problems were to many for the results achieved, overwintering and transportation being the two biggest deterrents in keeping it. I was amazed when dismantling it how the growth had actually intermingled in being tied in.

I have often thought about trying again but moving the spiral around and trying to keep that frost free in winter, the challenge is to much.



Just A Thought:

While we were last in the USA, we were due to give a talk on Propagation via Zoom to Greater Seattle Fuchsia Society, so I prepared a PowerPoint presentation at home, saving it to a memory stick along with the script, I decided a few days before the talk to just run through things. I had saved the script and PowerPoint together and it just would not open. **PANIC**. After calming down I decided I had enough material stored on various devices to put another presentation together. Just before the tragic discovery we had been to a garden center when I found a fuchsia I had lost, so purchased it. It was very stretched and long intermodal gaps (looking for light) So I decided to cut it back, in doing so thought the cut pieces could be used in the Greater Seattle Fuchsia Society Talk. I thought what I did might be of interest to some of you.



Cut the severed branch just above and just below a node



So that you have six potential cuttings



Plant the severed pieces up to just where the side shoots are leaving the stem

John's Jottings

Peat-Free Composts

As you are probably aware the government has now undertaken to phase out sales of peat to gardeners by mid-2024 and use in commercial nurseries by 2030. There have been several false dawns about this (2010 and 2020), but it now looks like it is going to happen and there are many-free composts starting to appear. All of us who have grown in peat for many years are going to need to try and find something different to use, which will probably mean some adaption to your growing methods.

One of the potential problems is two of the common components being used, Coir and composted bark may be in short supply in the next few years.

The arguments about the sustainability of peat have been raging for many years, but it is clear we are using it at a much faster rate than it can naturally replace itself and it does function as a very good carbon store absorbing and locking in Carbon Dioxide from the atmosphere.

I have referred to the WHICH testing results for container growing and bringing on young plants. As far as I am aware the testing for plants grown in containers is on potatoes and pelargoniums. For bringing on young plants the testing is on tomato and antirrhinum seedlings.

Melcourt SylvaGrow

Those of you who have read my articles know that I have been trying out Melcourt SylvaGrow peat-free compost for a few years after it topped the WHICH trials on compost and has a RHS recommendation. This is compost containing mainly composted bark, wood fibre and coir with enough feed for 3 to 4 weeks. In my initial test I mixed it with the same proportions of Perlite and grit as my normal peat compost blend and grew identical cuttings on side by side. I was quite impressed with it, not noticing any significant differences between it and my peat compost. I have heard people say it dries out too quickly, but I didn't see plants flagging anymore quickly in the SylvaGrow compared to the peat compost. It does tend to dry out more quickly on the surface and that maybe what people are seeing. Some positives I have noted is the Vine Weevil do not thrive in it in the same way as in peat composts. You do find the odd weevil, but I have not so far found a pot grown in SylvaGrow full of them!! The other observation is that root regrowth seems to be better in SylvaGrow over the winter rather than in peat composts. I usually need to repot plants grown in peat composts. It does however need plenty of feed to get good results. The other test I have been making is to try 100% SylvaGrow with no grit or Perlite additives as it is quite open and free draining. So far it looks promising. In the WHICH tests updated in February 2022 this came second in the container grown plants section with a score of 70%.

Homebase Peat Free Multi-Purpose Compost

This one beat the Melcourt SylvaGrow in the container grown plants section of the WHICH tests with a score of 75%. It is a mix of bark fines, steam-treated wood fibre and coir with enough feed for 6 weeks. I have not tried this one yet but will give it a try! It is probably going to be quite consistent as the component quality can all be controlled quite easily. Having now looked at it, there has quite a lot of wood fibre present.

B&Q GoodHome Enriched Multi-Purpose Compost

This one came out as the best in the "Raising young plants" Section of the WHICH tests with a score of 86%. It is made from coir, green compost and composted bark. I would have a little bit of hesitation because of the green waste component, although it depends on the quality control of this. WHICH emphasises to make sure you buy the enriched version!

Bathgate Multi-Purpose Peat Free Compost

This one came out fourth in the "Raising young plants" Section of the WHICH tests with a score of 75%. Carol Gubler is trying out the "Champions Blend" version of this one currently and I will get a few bags to try. Carols says it is quite heavy and seems to be loam based with sand and coir. Having now looked at it quite closely it seems to be more like fine composted bark, coir, some coconut fibre and a lot of fine sand.

So, what other peat free composts are there? A browse around the internet revealed a few others that might be worth a try. First visit was a blog by Jack Wallington on his peat free compost trials. Besides SylvaGrow he was trialling Westland New Horizon All Plant Compost, Fertile Fibre Organic Multipurpose Compost and Dalefoot Wool Compost for Potting.

Westland New Horizon All Plant Compost

The new version no longer contains composted green waste and is based on a blend of wood fibre, coir and bark. It also contains an "organic fertiliser" and a water retention aid. This is based on the compost sold by Sinclair's which Westland took over in 2015.

Fertile Fibre Organic Multipurpose compost

The company started producing composts from coir and composted hop waste. Currently the composts contain coir, bark, Vermiculite/Perlite sterilised loam and organic fertilisers.

Dalefoot Wool Compost for Potting

Made primarily from sheep's wool and bracken with added comfrey and slow-release fertiliser.

Another I have seen with good review is Carbon Gold's Biochar All Purpose Compost. This is made from coir and biochar. Biochar is made from the pyrolysis of organic material at high temperature in absence of oxygen (similar to charcoal) and is essentially carbon.

Peat Free Compost Components

Composted Bark

The bark is a by-product of the forestry industry, and the larger sizes pieces are used for mulching and the smaller size composted. It is mainly from pine trees and UK sourced.

Coir

This is a fibrous material made from coconut husks and milled into a peat like material for horticulture. Most comes from Southern India and Sri Lanka. A large amount of water is needed to remove salts from the fibre in manufacture.

Wood Fibre

By product from the timber industry where wood chips are heated under pressure with steam which breaks the wood up into fluffy fibres. It is increasingly used in peat free composts and can make up to 50% of the mix. It can lock in nitrogen. Note that a related process is a similar creation of wood fibres for the paper & board industry where whole forests are grown to supply the industry with wood chips. The final fibres can be bleached or unbleached depending on the application.

Composted Green Waste

The main problems that come with this is variability, plastic debris, nutrient imbalances, and weedkiller residues. Many peat-free compost suppliers have stopped using this and those who still are taking much more control of the sourcing and composting process.

Anything Else?

In the RHS February Garden magazine on page 35 there was an article about making your own compost from pasteurised soil, garden compost and horticultural grit/sharp sand. The amounts vary depending on what the compost is to be used for. The pasteurisation process recommended was to put sieved soil into a 4 in deep baking tray cover with aluminium foil and heat to 82°C for 30 minutes. I can't see me getting away with that in the kitchen!!! But you can probably buy the topsoil in bags. A key part here would be good control over the composting process with shredded material and a mixture of green and brown waste.

Summing up

So, this is what I have found. Has anyone else got experience on using peat free composts for growing fuchsias and if so, why not share your experience with the rest of the members.

Trial in progress

I have started taking some batches of cuttings in fours and I am growing them on in the Homebase peat free, the Melcourt SilvaGrow, the Champions Blend peat free and my own normal mixture which is peat multipurpose and 10% John Innes No3, perlite and sharp sand/grit. I have put the weakest of the 4 cuttings into my own mix. So far it is the cultivars Frank Saunders, Colin Dorrington and Gwen Dodge. Others will be added. This is how they are looking in April.



Melcourt
Silvagrow

Usual Peat
based Mixture

Homebase
Peat Free
Multi purpose

Bathgate Champions
Blend Multi-Purpose
Peat Free

Triphylla Fuchsias for Large Pots

Triphyllas are a group of fuchsias with long tubed single flowers growing in very showy terminal clusters. Although many of the earlier cultivars resulted from crosses involving the fuchsia species *F. triphylla*, many are also the result of crossing other species fuchsias.

The early triphylla cultivars were mainly hybridised by Carl Bonstedt of Germany around the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries and some of these are still widely grown today. They were mainly hybrids between *F. triphylla* and other fuchsia species. Initially the flower colours were predominately red and orange, but later pinks, whites and other multicolour flowers were introduced. Recently Dutch hybridisers have been introducing new triphyllas with different colours, especially pinks and near whites. Two more recent ones gaining in popularity being Jaspers Unbelievable and Jaspers Lightning.

This group of cultivars make very good subjects for growing in large pots. As they are not very frost hardy, they need overwintering in green leaf with a minimum temperature of 5°C. For those without a heated greenhouse, buying in reasonable sized plants in 10 to 13 cm pots during April or May and planting several together in a large pot with a free draining compost will give spectacular results in the summer. Do not overwater in the first month while the roots are spreading through the pot. They generally thrive in full sun and there is no need to stop any of the plants (remove the growing tips) as this will delay flowering. While the tip of the stem is flowering another set of side-shoots will grow from the leaf axils below the flowering tip and take over flowering once the first tip has flowered out. Providing the plants is kept watered and fed once the initial feed in

the compost has been consumed and old flowers/berries are removed, they will carry on flowering until the first frosts. Triphylla fuchsias generally do better with a high nitrogen or balanced feed. Too much high potash feed can make them brittle and encourage leaf drop.

Some of the best varieties for growing in large pots are listed below.

Coralle (syn Koralle)

A vigorous upright with large velvety sage-green leaves and brilliant long tubed orange red flowers. Carl Bonstedt (DE) 1905, *F. triphylla* x *F. fulgens*.

Gartenmeister Bonstedt

A strong growing upright variety with terminal clusters of long tubed flowers with an orange red tube and sepals and a lighter orange corolla. Mid to dark green foliage with largish leaves. Carl Bonstedt (DE) 1905, *F. triphylla* x unknown.

Insulinde

An upright cultivar with bronzed dark green leaves with a quite shiny surface. The long-tubed flowers are red orange with corolla petals striped with a darker shade. Hermann de Graaff (NL) 1991, Göttingen x *F. venusta*.

Jaspers Lightning

Terminal flowering upright. The flowers have a long white tube, white sepals tipped pale green and pale pink corolla. Foliage is a mid-green. J van Aspert (NL) 2014. Göttingen x Ting-a-Ling.

Jill Holloway

Upright with terminal flowering clusters. Flowers have a long deep pink tube, deep pink sepals and red-pink corolla. Brian Kimberly (UK) 2007 Parentage unknown.

Scarlett Jester

A triphylla type more tolerant of the cold, this strong growing cultivar make a superb display with clusters of long tubed dark red flowers. Mario de Cooker (NL) 2011, (Göttingen x Our Ted) x *F. magellanica* var. *molinae* (alba)

Taco

A lax upright growing fuchsia with deep green leaves with long tubed flowers of dark rose and orange. The flower colour is darker in the sun but goes more rose-pink in the shade. Jan de Boer (NL) 1998. (*F. denticulata* x *F. decussata*) x *F. fulgens* 'rubra grandiflora'.

Thalia

An upright growing fuchsia with dark olive-green leaves with magenta ribs and veins and long tubed flowers of orange-scarlet. Carl Bonstedt (DE) 1905. *F. triphylla* x unknown. It can also be trained to make a good standard



Gartenmeister Bonstedt



Jasper's Lightning

British Fuchsia Society

Eastern Roadshow



Venue

Feering Community Centre

Coggeshall Road

Feering

C05 9QB



15th May 10.00am – 3.00pm

Speakers:



Arthur Phillips – Growing Standards

Ric Reilly – Walk on the Wild Side

Paul Russell – Growing Fuchsias My Way

**Ric will also give a short talk on making
online & Hybrid meetings work for your society**

Road shows are open to everyone not just BFS members

Free Entry

Tea & Coffee £2.00 for the day.

**Please bring your own packed lunch for
the day.**



**We look forward
to seeing
you all**



Festival of Fuchsias at Malvern Autumn Show 2023

Yes, we are interested in having a stand at the Festival of Fuchsias

Name of Society/ Individual.....

Address.....

.....

Postcode.....

Phone

Email.....

Size of Stand – 6' x 6' or

Tiering for tables? – see below

Electricity Yes/No

Possible Theme – please delete the one that is not applicable

1. **Floral** – predominantly flowering plants – all clearly labelled. A great splash of colour.
2. **Education** – a stand that concentrates perhaps on one aspect of growing fuchsias, could be one type such as species, or a style of fuchsias such as how to grow a standard, or perhaps taking cuttings etc. I leave it to your imagination.
3. **Something else!**

Possible staging designs



