

Fuchsia News Spring 2019

Carol Gubler
Little Brook Fuchsias
Ash Green Lane West
Ash Green
Surrey
GU12 6HL
01252 329731
carol.gubler@ntlbusiness.com

Arthur Phillips
39, Highfields
Bromsgrove
Worcestershire
B61 7DA
01527 870012

John Nicholass
36 Beach Road West
Portishead
North Somerset
BS20 7HU
01275 840203

Ric Reilly
Penvale House
Treluswell Cross
Penryn
Cornwall
TR10 9AN
07973 173367

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 £22 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. If we are advertising your show on your entry – please don't forget to include a postcode – so many of us use a satnav and a postcode makes it so much easier.
- Show details - please email me details of your show if you would like them to go in the Late June /early July edition

Top Ten 2019

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 front of this publication or why not email it to carol@thebfs.org.uk 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 – we would all love to know?

Arthur's Articles

Preparing for the Show:

Whether you are showing at a National Show, local society or the village show, preparation of your fuchsias is the same, and here are a few simple guidelines for you to follow.

Your fuchsias should be nicely shaped but not too tightly pinched and dependent on show date and the cultivar you should have carried out your last stop at 6–8 weeks for singles, 8-12 weeks for doubles and 12-18 weeks for triphyllas and species. With your plant coming into bloom make sure you clean your plant removing all debris from the pot, take off all of the marked and yellowing leaves, remove all blooms that have been open for more than ten days for the show, they will be past their best by then. Check your fuchsias for any pests or diseases as they will get you down pointed. Never stage a plant showing signs of rust or fuchsia gall mite; these will be removed from the show bench.

When you arrive at the show change the pot the plant has been grown in for a clean one. Always stage your plant on an appropriately sized saucer to keep water off the show bench. Always check your entry against the schedule to ensure you stage your fuchsias in the correct class.

Growing Fuchsia Baskets:

How to grow fuchsia baskets is one of the many questions asked at shows, so I thought I would pass on to you how I grow my baskets.

I start by planning ahead and taking my cuttings in the spring usually around April/May of the year prior to that in which I require my baskets for. For a full basket I would use five plants, for half baskets I would use four plants, to achieve this I would aim to strike double the amount of cuttings in the variety selected to give me a choice of the strongest plants also as insurance against possible losses.

When my cuttings are rooted I usually pot them on into 5cm square pots (I use square pots because you can get more into a space than round). I usually then stop all the fuchsias at three sets of leaves, just removing the growing tips. Always stop all the fuchsias at the same time. Remember **all the fuchsias must be turned quarter turn each day**. As the fuchsias fill the pot with root then they need to be potted on into the next sized pot. I try to pot 5cm to 8cm to 9cm and so on. It is always better to pot on slightly earlier than waiting until the plants become root bound. Once that happens then the fuchsias will stop growing and go into flowering mode which we do not want.

As the fuchsias grow then I continue stopping at every three sets of leaves so that we are developing nicely shaped plants. Remember it is important that each set of plants are stopped at the same time to keep all of them growing at the same rate. All the time that the plants are growing I feed at every watering with 1/7th strength high nitrogen feed. All feeds have on the packet a set of numbers that give the feed strength, usually given as ratio but sometimes percentage i.e.: 3:1:1 or 30% 10% 10%. These represent, Nitrogen Phosphates, Potash in that order.

The fuchsias are grown on through the summer months without flowering and come late autumn or early winter, (I usually chose the time just before Christmas) it is the time to plant up your basket for next summer. It is usual to use wire mesh baskets, but any form of basket can be used, if you are intending to exhibit your basket then check the show schedule requirements. If using a wire basket, then I line mine with plastic. (I use old compost bags turned inside out) making a few holes in the bottom of the plastic for drainage. I usually find this easier when I have put the compost in the basket. With the compost in the basket, but not completely full, I arrange four of the selected fuchsias around the rim of the basket, and in the centre place an empty pot of the same size of the ones the plants are in the centre.

The centre plant now needs to be stopped at each pair of leaves to give a bushy plant to help fill in the centre of the basket. This final plant then needs to be planted into the basket around about March. The plants that are planted into the basket need to be stopped at every 2nd pair of leaves. The act of stopping will fill the centre but also trailing down to cover the basket. (remember if you are intending to exhibit your basket the basket should be covered completely with growth when viewed at eye level).

The fuchsia stopping needs to cease six to eight weeks before the basket is required, depending on the cultivar, when the last stops have been put on the growth, you can switch your feed to a high potash feed, but I do not do that until the buds have formed

A little Turkish Delight or Küpe Çiçeği (Earing flowers) By John Utley

Back in 2006, my wife and I decided to take the plunge and emigrate to Turkey, a place we had spent a lot of time in previously and had come to love. Of the few downsides of such a move, one was having to give up being a BFS judge, speaker and a regular exhibitor of fuchsias, especially around the north of England.

Until we moved here, I had not taken too much interest in Fuchsias in Turkey, indeed, did not really know if they existed here. All these years later, after re-joining the BFS, I was asked the question “do they grow in Turkey?”, so that prompted me to pen a short article to give you an insight into fuchsias in this part of the world.

The answer to the question is a definite “Yes” – but not as you would maybe recognise. Most villages here hold a weekly market which is where local growers sell their produce, including fuchsia cuttings and mature plants. Normally sold in small black plastic pouches in a very dry, sandy loam as shown below, about 10 cm tall, costing around 28p each at today's rate.



The more mature plants are sold in the same way, the one shown was approx. £1.25, both cuttings and mature plants were bought in mid-March.
The first thing to do was to make the plants look a little more presentable by re-potting into plastic pots and well weathered terracotta.



Now the problems really start. By far the major one is heat. In mid- March when plants are available, the temperature can be a warm 18° on a calm sunny day but very soon summer sets in and things warm up. By late June temperatures rise to 30° plus (in the shade) and stay there until mid-September. So, as we all know, fuchsias have a habit of “shutting down” if it gets above 25° which means that flowering time is virtually over by the end of June. Even if you can get plants out of direct sun, the problem of all-round heat means that inevitably plants will suffer.

So, with our fuchsia season in full swing in April/May what other problems do we face?

We can get some decent compost here with average NPK levels which is fine for initial potting up but there are no specific feeds for fuchsias. I tend to use a general plant feed which I use around the rest of the garden. Pests and diseases do exist, mainly in the form of aphids and ants, which are easily dealt with. But I have to say that I have never encountered the dreaded Vine Weevil, Spider Mite or Fuchsia Gall Mite here, nor have I seen Fuchsia Rust (though we do get rust on roses). Maybe the heat keeps them all away!

We normally have plants in bloom in the markets from April onwards, but I tend to stop mine when I buy them as cuttings so flowering is later but before the highest temperatures.

One big drawback here is that none of the plants are named. I have lost count of the hours I have spent trying to match up my plants with photos of similar flowers in my fuchsia books! The only one I have ever put an accurate name to is a plant of *Thalia*, growing in an old olive oil can in the village. Needless to say, a cutting was surreptitiously taken and grown on but I lost it after a couple of years. Despite no names, the plants can be enjoyed for what they are, photos of a few I have included here. Not a vast variety of blooms but with care, they can still provide enjoyment to a Fuchsia enthusiast here in Turkey.



Thanks! It is interesting to read about growing fuchsias in other countries and with a range of problems!!

A look back!

Like all editors there are times to look back and reprint things that have been used before but are words of wisdom – so here are a few bits and pieces!

GROW LESS – GROW BETTER – John Kirby from Birmingham FS

As beginners the one sound piece of advice that was always passed on to us by our tutors and which we always completely ignored was “Don’t grow too many”.

As beginners this overwhelming passion that we have for fuchsias caused us to take far too many cuttings than we needed and then after reading the very colourful and exotic names and descriptions in the new catalogues to even rush out and add even more to our collection and so we always ended up with far too many plants and too little a time to devote to each ones individual development and so inevitably the end results for some growers are disappointing and many just become enthusiasts with little to enthuse over!

Many, many times over the years when I was exhibiting my plants at shows I've heard lots of people say "I've got no interest in showing" and I'm sure that most of the time that statement was genuine but sometimes I used to think that the truth was 'I would love to put a plant on the show bench but I just can't grow one good enough.'

I'm definitely not saying that all societies should become full of exhibitors, that would be wrong, but I do think that upon joining it was everyone's aim to learn the art of transforming a chosen cutting into a fairly well shaped plant that is covered blooms otherwise why do we join a society, listen to the speakers and pick their brains? I have also known some exhibitors who have thought it wise to grow as many plants as they can, cram them in the greenhouse for the winter and come the spring throw out the ones that are not looking too good, grow the remaining ones on again and then later pick the best ones out again for the show, sorry but doing this means you'll always be amongst the seconds and thirds if you're lucky.

If you really want to improve your cultural proficiency whether it be to have better shaped plants that are full of flowers on your patio or push for the top place on the show bench remember what you were told as a beginner "Don't grow too many". Surely it makes sense to only grow as many plants as you can devote your time to give each individual one the care and attention it needs, if you don't the end results will always be disappointing – so grow less and grow better.

Dealing with very hot days! Taken from an Australian Newsletter

(This is me dreaming of another hot summer!)

Your aim on hot days is to keep the roots of your plants cool.

Mulching with organic materials will help the garden grown fuchsias to cope with hot weather, as the mulch slows water loss and keeps direct sun off the soil, so keeping the soil and roots cool. Giving garden grown fuchsias a thorough weekly (more or less frequently, depending on weather conditions and the soil) soaking is much better for the plants than a light daily watering, which encourages surface rooting.

Water loss through the sides and bottom of plastic pots is less than that from wire baskets (lined with bark, coconut fibre etc) or clay pots. However, water loss through basket liners has the positive effect of keeping plant roots cool. Care needs to be taken with using black pots, as direct sun on the sides of the pots can raise the temperature to an elevated level that will damage the plant roots. At air temperatures of little more than 20 degrees C, maximum temperatures on the sunny side of the pot can reach nearly 40 degrees C, which is lethal to fuchsia roots. Compost in a small hanging plastic pot can also reach temperatures which are damaging to plant roots even if direct sunlight dose does not reach the outside of the pot.

If possible, move your pots and baskets to the coolest part of the garden when hot weather is forecast, plastic baskets should be lowered to as near ground level if at all possible. If you cannot move your pots to a cool spot, you could try one of the following:

1. Mound up mulch around the pots and wet the mulch when you water your plants.
2. Cover the outside of your pots with aluminium foil – with the shiny side facing out.
3. Keep in mind that, even in shaded areas, air temperatures a number of feet above the ground, are higher than air temperatures at ground level, especially if the ground is damp.

Membership

When you join an association, society or guild, Just pause for a while as your form is being filled
And think what becoming a member entails, Don't turn out to be yet another who fails.

It's not just the cost of your annual fees but attending the meetings instead of TV

Of actively helping to arrange the society's "do's" and not opting out whenever you choose.

Don't say all the decisions are made by a few, get on the committee and state your own view.

Don't slate club officials from behind their backs be honest and face them when grinding your axe

Drum up fellow members when interest flags, don't say "not tonight it's too much of a drag"

Or "there's gardening and painting and lots more to do" **A Society is made up of such members as you.**

Remember the comradeship found when on board with that and hard work, the futures assured.

So, please do your bit be it LARGE or small, without **YOU** my friends there'd be NO Society at all.

John's Jottings - The Small Pot Classes (taken from Fuchsia News 2011)

Within the BFS and affiliated society shows, the small pot classes essentially cater for growing fuchsias in 9cm (3½") pots, though a few shows also include a class for 10cm (4") pots. There are classes for a single 9cm pot, 3 x 9cm pots and 5 x 9 cm pots. Read the wording carefully for any multi-pot classes as they may specify distinctly different cultivars or a minimum of 2 different cultivars in a 3 pot class or 3 different cultivars in a 5 pot class or any cultivars. The last definition means you could grow exhibit 5 plants of the same cultivar in a five pot class, though I often think the contrast between light and darker coloured cultivars looks better. There are many growers who have demonstrated a lot of skill in this area and although I have had some success in these classes there are others who I consider to be better growers in this arena. However, I will first tell you how I grow my small pots and perhaps that will prompt others to contribute their own techniques. (please?!!)

The first important item to discuss is choice of cultivars! For this type of growth, you need to use small flowered, bushy, self-branching and compact cultivars. I would normally recommend sticking to small single or semi-double flowered cultivars. Double flowered cultivars are generally not free flowering enough and tend to have longer intermodal growth and you have more chance of getting one extra stop on a single flowered cultivar. There are a few small flowered doubles that can be used if you really want to try a double.

My preferred way of growing these plants is to take late summer or early autumn cuttings and grow them on as a single plant. By this I mean tip cuttings taken from late August to early October from suitable stock, often plants that have been used for July shows and been cut back and allowed to reshoot. Take care when selecting your cutting materials ensuring the shoot used is healthy, exhibits a balanced growth with all leaves opposite and of equal size and no flower buds present. Take 2 or 3 times as many cuttings you need and select the best to grow on. Cuttings taken at this time of year often root quickly without additional heat in a cold propagator. You can also use three leaved cuttings as long as they are symmetric, and these will form a larger plant more quickly. I root my cuttings in cells strips (60 cells to a seed tray which split into 5 strips of 12) in a mixture of 2 parts sifted moss peat, 1 part vermiculite and 1 part Cornish grit. Take the cutting below a leaf node with a sharp scalpel or modelling knife to give 2 pairs of leaves and a growing tip. Remove the bottom set of leaves and if the next set is too large cut them in half taking care not to bruise the stem. Place the cutting in a prepared hole in the cutting media and lightly firm the compost around the stem. Add a label with the variety name and date the cutting was taken. When the strip is full, I water them in from above with a mist spray containing a weak high nitrogen feed (i.e. Chempak No 2) and diluted Maxicrop, then place them in the propagator either out of the sun or shielded from the sun. During September these will root in 3 weeks with occasional further misting. When they are rooted increase the ventilation to the propagator in steps, and after another 1 to 2 weeks remove the strip from the propagator. When the cuttings have adapted to the greenhouse conditions, select the cuttings you think are best and carefully remove the root ball from the cell and pot up into a 6cm (2½") pot in the compost mix you normally use. With the current varying quality of amateur composts, I will not make any recommendations except to say that you find one with high peat content and add grit or sharp sand with Vermiculite or Perlite to open the texture. I favour adding a small proportion (approx. 5-10%) of John Innes No 2 or 3 as well. When the plant has settled and grown to 3 sets of leaves and a growing tip remove the tip carefully without damaging any of the axial buds. Note that some growers prefer to make the first stop at two pairs of leaves to make the plant more compact. Grow these plants on in the warmest and lightest place you can find in the greenhouse watering them as necessary. A wire mesh shelf in the apex of the roof is an excellent place! Many exhibitors, especially those living in the more northerly climes grow plants through the winter on heated benches. It is extremely important to inspect and turn the plants ¼ of a turn every other day as this helps to keep the balanced shape. Removing any dying leaves before they can cause problems is the best advice. When the side shoots have grown sufficiently then remove the growing tips again on these. I prefer to remove them at 2 sets of leaves on the bottom two sets of side shoots and one on the top set, though some exhibitors will stop every shoot at one pair of leaves. Most fuchsias will throw an additional set of shoots inside the top set and these can also be stopped at one pair of leaves and these growths are important to build the crown of the plant. At this stage take a close look down from the top at the plant and look to see that everything is growing symmetrically. If one side shoot has gone a little awry, then carefully move it to the correct place and hold it in place with a cane or wire and after a few weeks it will stay in this position. Take care not to use too much force! If the branch needs to be moved a long way, either ditch the plant or do it in steps! Continue the growth stopping at every pair of leaves and feed with quarter strength balanced fertiliser at every watering. When the roots have grown sufficiently to fill the pot and are curling around the bottom, pot the plant on into a 8cm (3") pot. If possible, do this by the pot mould technique using a 6cm (2½") pot inside a 8cm (3") pot to minimise disturbance. If necessary, pot the plant down a little deeper in the 3" pot. Continue the growth shaping and stopping as necessary and it might be necessary to remove some of the bigger inside leaves to allow more light into the centre of the plant. When the plant is big enough pot it on into its final 9cm (3½") pot. This final potting needs to be done ideally at least 4 months before the show you have in mind. This will allow the plant to become root bound in the pot before the penultimate stop is done. Why is this? Well, for a single cultivar you need typically 60 days or a little less than 9 weeks from the final stop to full flowering. Then you need to allow another 3 to 4 weeks between the penultimate stop and the last stop. Hence you have 4

weeks minimum between the final potting and the penultimate stop for the plants roots to fill the space in the additional compost! Why am I going on so much about plants being root bound? Well it is this that drives the plant to flower profuse in an attempt to reproduce itself and being very pot bound at the final stop also means less extension growth is made keeping the final plant more compact! Please note that all this timing is still very weather dependant and designed for shows from late July to the end of August but if you are growing the plants with a specific single date as the objective, then consider adding one extra week to the final stop as you can always remove some open flowers 10 days before the show but you cannot make buds open on the day!!

To keep the growth compact the plants need to be grown outside as much as possible. This in the south west means moving them outside on suitable days from late March through to mid-May and then growing them outside exclusively from then on. If you are further north or colder you may have to delay this by 1-3 weeks. They can be placed in suitable trays out on a lawn or placed in double pots¹. Even when the stopping has finished it is still necessary to turn the plants regularly and continue to look at them, remove any dead leaves, spray if necessary and feed them. Through the summer months they will probably need watering most days but let them go as dry as you dare between watering. When the first flower buds start to form then either switch to a high potash feed or alternate between this and a balanced feed. About 10 days before the show remove any open flowers or any just about to open as these will be past their best by show day. If possible move the plants under netting to protect the flowers from honey bee damage. View the plants and decide what you will take and make your entries. The day before the show go through the plants and select the ones you intend to take and perhaps some spares if in doubt. Remember for multi-plant classes to check you adhere to the class wording; remember a contrast such as two white and a dark flowered cultivar work well. Try to ensure the plants used for multi-plant classes are of a similar size. Go through the plants and remove any debris or marked leaves or flowers, ensure the pot is clean and polished. It is allowed to change the pot for a clean one of the same size. Make sure you use the same make of pot as different manufacturers have different profiles so the plant may be loose with a different pot type. Dress the compost surface with fresh compost and ensure you have enough clean saucers of the right size. Place the label on the best side to make it easy to place the pots properly on the show bench.

On the show day water the plants well and allow them to drain. Pack them into suitable 3½” pot trays (the expanded polystyrene type are best if you can get them) so they can't move around and put them in the car. When you arrive at the show go to see the show secretary and pick up your cards. Find where the classes you are entering are in the show and pick your place. You will find the “German Towel on the sun chair” technique common where an exhibitor will place saucer(s) where they want to stage their exhibit. If there is not enough room, find a steward to make room for you, never move another exhibitor's plants!! Dress the plants to ensure all the flowers are out of the foliage and flower buds which are about to open may be tickled to get them open. However do not pop any buds as the judge will spot it!! Fill in the cultivar names and place your exhibitor card the correct way up in front of your exhibit. Stand back and make sure everything looks OK. Go away, cross fingers and wait!

There is always a discussion on what size the plants should be. A well-known former exhibitor and judge whose plants I was always trying to match or surpass said a good plant should be between 2½ & 3 times the pot diameter. Hence according to his guidance a 9cm (3½”) pot should be between just under 22.5cm (9”) and not more than 27cm (10½”) in diameter. You will see plants that are larger than this and they might win, but these dimensions are about right.

So the method I have described will take approximately 11 months from start to finish. A quicker alternative is to use a multi-plant technique. This entails taking cuttings as early as possible in the current year and then putting three cuttings of the same size stopped at two pairs of leaves into a 3” pot. They are then grown on in a similar way I have described, stopping at every pair of leaves but taking extra care to remove overlapping leaves and crossing branches. I have not been very successful with this method but I know a number of people are!

It is also possible to regrow a 9cm (3½”) pot for a second year, when the cultivar is rather slow growing. Some examples are ‘Nellie Nuttall’ and ‘Daniel Reynolds’. In this case the plant is cut back hard at the end of August, all of the old leaves are removed and then when it has started to shoot again pot back into a 8cm (3”) pot. Grow on as before keeping in green leaf over the winter. Other 9cm (3½”) pots can be grown on as 13cm (5”) pots the next year.

Below are some suitable cultivars to try growing in 9cm (3½”) pots. Many of these have won at various national shows in the last ten years and the ones in italics I have tried.

Alison Patricia, Andrew Hadfield, *Baby Bright*, *Ben Jamin*, *Border Raider*, *Brenda White*, Chris Bright, *Daniel Reynolds*, Diane Marie, *Dusky Beauty*, *Geoff Oke*, Hastings, Jenifer Ann Porter, *Jenny Sorensen*, Jessica Reynolds, June Marie Shaw, Just Pilk, *Kath van Hanegem*, *Katrina Thompsen*, *Kobold*, Lambada, Little Margaret, *Loves Reward*, *Louise Nicholls*, Margaret Lewis, *Maria Landy*, *Marilyn Olsen*, *Midwinter*, Mr A Huggett, My Little Cracker, My Little Gem, *Nellie Nuttall*, Norman Welton, Rachel Ann, *Sophie Louise*, *Twinnny*, *Waveney Waltz*.

Others which have been grown include the Fantasia series and their sports (Pink Fantasia etc), Katy James, Sister Ann Haley and Grumpy Gord but I have not had so much success with these hence have not recommended them. Some of the older cultivars will also make fair small pots though it is difficult to compete with some of the modern cultivars. Suggestions would be any of the thumb series (Tom Thumb, Lady Thumb etc.), Countess of Aberdeen, Westminster Chimes and perhaps even Alice Hoffman would work well.

If you really must grow a double perhaps try a small floriferous double such as Wigan Peer or Tausendschön.

Throughout this article I have designated pot sizes in metric with the imperial size in brackets. That is because most pots are sold in metric sizes and usually with an "F" after the number (e.g. 9F) designating a full pot.

Thanks John! As John comments – if you use a different method etc – please let us know!

Fuchsia Gall Mite

As ever we have to be aware of the potential problems of **Fuchsia Gall Mite** – here are some thoughts from the USA. Rodney and the growers in the USA have lived with Fuchsia Gall Mite much longer than we have and have other thoughts on how to tackle the problem. However, this may be the way, that we go in future... so this is food for thought.

Gall Mite Control Starts with Pruning *By Rodney Bergquist of American Fuchsia Society*

Growing fuchsias in California is not doom & gloom. Now that we have accepted the fact that gall mites are not going away, for various reasons, we have moved on to a more practical, common sense approach to controlling the amount of plant damage, the gall mites can cause. Janis & I visited several members' gardens this year and not once did we see any gall mite plant blemishes. Many of our members have turned a visual negative into a visual positive, by cutting off the developing galls as they occur, before they become a problem.

We need to stop promoting our own bad press. The pictures we have all seen of ugly gall mite plant damage represent the extreme, uncared for fuchsias, and are not the norm. Bad news like fuchsia gall mites only remains to be bad news, if people fail to respond to the problem.

We need to see the bigger picture. If fuchsia societies cannot offer the general public, a gall mite control method that is, simple, easy to apply and reasonably effective, we cannot realistically expect to gain new members.

We need to soften our fuchsia gall mite terminology. We need to reduce the importance of fuchsia gall mite plant damage to significant nuisance that can be controlled when performing routine plant maintenance. Instead of saying, watch out for the horrible gall mites, we could say, "keep an eye out for the gall mite plant blemishes or gall mite new construction sites and remove them (cut them off)".

EXPERIENCE IS THE BEST TEACHER:

You will not normally see any gall mite plant blemishes in our yard. Why is that? It's because Janis & I understand the need to be pro-active. We remove all newly developing galls during the initial development stage, before they become a problem.

What are galls? We all know what a normal leaf or normal flower bud looks like. Galls are SWOLLEN abnormal disfigured plant growth, normally on a leaf, leaf stem or bud. The gall area will be swollen, may look hairy and sometimes looks reddish in colour.

When do the galls become a problem? The galls contain newly hatched baby gall mites which are feeding on the plant tissue inside the developing galls. If you leave the galls on the plant, the baby gall mites will mature, become adults, leave the gall, and move to different branches, lay more eggs, which will create more galls. The simplest thing we can do to help ourselves control gall mites, is remove the developing galls. The galls can easily be removed (cut off) in about the same amount of time it takes to dead head an old rose flower. When you remove the galls, you are removing future generations of gall mites and future generations of gall mite plant damage.

Gall Mite Control starts with pruning: The overall objective of common sense gall mite control is focusing on reducing the number of gall mites living on our fuchsias. Fewer gall mites living on your plant will create fewer galls.

I recommend you consider using the following steps to reduce the number of gall mites living on your plants. These steps were originally recommended to me by Peter Baye, several years ago, and have been written in previous bulletin articles. If you want to significantly reduce the number of gall mites on your fuchsias, do the following;

When it's time to prune: Prune the plant back as far as you dare. Remove all leaves, flowers, buds and loose bark.

Thoroughly spray the plant with horticultural oil, at winter strength. The oil will smother the adult gall mites that are trying to winter over, and will also cover most of next year's eggs that may have been laid.

Summer maintenance: is also an important part of controlling fuchsia gall mites. In our yard, Janis & I have two very large fuchsias. One is named 'Cardinal' and the other is named, *F. magallancia*. Both fuchsias have been in our landscape for over 40 years. Both fuchsias get various amounts of gall mite plant blemishes 3 to 5 times as year. How do I maintain these fuchsias? **I play hide and seek with the gall mites**, they hide and I seek to find them. Every 7 to 10 days, Janis & I check all

our fuchsias for newly developing galls. When I find a new gall mite construction site, I say, "There you are". Then I explain to the gall mites, that I have a lot of friends that do not like gall mites, so I am going to move your newly constructed housing to a new location, where you and your family will readily be accepted. It's called the "Trash Bin Housing Area". Then I cut off the gall, one node below the plant blemish and move them to our trash bin location.

IMPORTANT: After 10 years of maintaining these two landscape fuchsias, I finally realized that I had been controlling the amount of gall mite plant damage on these two fuchsias by simply removing the developing galls, before they became a problem. **I did not let them multiply.**

In summary: I spent about three years being obsessed with eliminating all the gall mites on my fuchsias using various extreme control methods. One day when Peter Baye was visiting, I told him that all my extreme control efforts had not eliminated all the gall mites on my fuchsias, and that I was frustrated and discouraged. He said, "You are trying too hard to kill all the gall mites on your fuchsias, because in the end, it does not matter. He said, even if I was lucky enough to kill all the gall mites on all my fuchsias today, tomorrow the neighbourhood hummingbird who has been visiting uncared for fuchsias in the wild, or the uncared for fuchsias of the neighbourhood, will visit my yard and possible bring in a new generation of gall mites. Or, I will go somewhere and buy a new fuchsia, which also has the possibility of bringing in a new generation of gall mites".

He also said; "Up to this point, most of us have only considered how horrible the gall mite plant damage can become. However, it does not have to be all ugly or no gall mite plant damage at all. As a fuchsia society, realistically, we need to be somewhere in between no gall mite damage and ugly". I am constantly reminded of that, as I do routine plant maintenance, when I see mild to moderate amounts of plant damage caused by cutter bees, aphids, spider mites, rust, torn leaves, sun burnt leaves, broken branches and a few gall mite plant blemishes, all of which are a part of nature's normal plant life cycle.

We first published this in 2011 but the advice is still good – please be vigilant and keep on advising us if you find FGM

And finally!

Did I read that sign right?

Toilet out of order. Please use floor below

In a laundromat: Automatic washing machines: please remove all your clothes when the light goes out

In a London department store: bargain basement upstairs

In an office: Would the person who took the step ladder yesterday please bring it back or further steps will be taken

In an office: After tea break staff should empty the teapot and stand upside down on the draining board

Outside a secondhand shop: We exchange anything - bicycles, washing machines, etc. Why not bring your wife along and get a wonderful bargain?

Notice in health food shop window: Closed due to illness

Spotted in a safari park: Elephants please stay in your car

Seen during a conference: For anyone who has children and doesn't know it, there is a day care on the 1st floor

Notice in a farmer's field: The farmer allows walkers to cross the field, for free, but the bull charges.

Message on a leaflet: If you cannot read, this leaflet will tell you how to get lessons

On a repair shop door: We can repair anything. (please knock hard on the door - the bell doesn't work)

Best Wishes and Good Growing

Carol, Arthur, John and Ric