

CANBERRA GERANIUM & FUCHSIA SOCIETY INC.

Vol 49 No. 2 - October 2026

ISSN 1441-7928

www.cgfs.org.au

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MEMBERSHIP FEES Membership fees for the year (January–December) are Single \$20.00, Family \$30.00 and International memberships \$30.00. Members who join after 1st November will be credited for the following year.

All financial members of the Society receive a copy of the Journal, which is currently published twice a year. Whilst every effort is made to ensure that the information therein is correct, it is the individual authors who accept the responsibility for the contents of their articles.

The Society's monthly meetings are the place to learn how to propagate and grow fuchsia and geranium plants. The Society is made up of knowledgeable, interesting and friendly people who share a deep passion for pelargoniums, geraniums and fuchsias and a desire to learn more about them. So bring along your plants to show, and your questions or stories to share.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS: OCTOBER-NOVEMBER 2026 – APRIL 2027

Unless otherwise stated, with the exception of January and July and possibly December, all meetings are held on the first Saturday of each month at 2.00 p.m. in the Woden Valley Uniting Church Hall, Gillies Street, Curtin.

Please remember to wear your name tag so that we can all get to know each other, and you must sign the Attendance Book when you arrive, this will ensure you are covered by the Public Liability Insurance that the Society pays each year.

Wednesday 21 October – Combined Bus Trip with Belconnen Garden Club to Goulburn

A reminder that the bus pickup point is the carpark at Belconnen Raiders Club Kippax, 155 Hardwick Crescent, Holt. Please arrive by 8.15am for departure at 8.30 am. Return to Kippax at 5pm. All day parking is available in the carpark.

Arrangements are underway for the bus to pick up also at Kingston Railway Station beforehand. Times and details to be emailed to those who have booked. Any queries, please contact Treasurer, Janelle Mohr or Maria Geppert (contact details are at the front of this Journal).

31 October and 1 November – Display and Plant Sale at HSOC Show, EPIC

The Society is again hosting a Stand at the Horticultural Society's Iris, Rhododendron and Azalea Show which is being held over Saturday and Sunday at the Mallee Pavilion, EPIC. Arrangements, rosters and further details to be advised at October and November meetings.

Members who are planning to sell plants are reminded that their plants should follow the 'Sales of Plants – Guidelines for Registered Growers'. When selling plants to the public, please remember that they need to not only look their best, but also need to be very well grown. Purchasers will probably not look after these new plants as well as members, and we don't want the plants failing because they are not well established.

7 November – Monthly Meeting – venue: Curtin - 2pm

Members social meeting, "Show and Tell", Q & A time, raffle, library and afternoon tea.

5 December – Xmas Party – venue: Curtin – 2pm

As well as conducting a brief monthly meeting, the Society holds a Christmas afternoon tea, and members are asked to bring along a plate to share and also a small garden related wrapped gift, around the value of \$5 to \$10. The gifts are put under the tree and then handed out during the afternoon. We hope that as many members who can do come along and enjoy the social afternoon. The Xmas afternoon tea will be held at our usual venue in Curtin.



Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all!



January - No meeting

6 February – Monthly Meeting – venue: Curtin - 2pm

Members social meeting, “Show and Tell”, Q & A time, raffle, library and afternoon tea.

6 March - Annual General Meeting and Workshop – venue: Curtin - 2pm

The AGM will be followed by a demonstration and workshop for members on taking Geranium & Pelargonium Cuttings. Bring along a plant that can be used to take cuttings from, or cuttings, and scissors, pots, labels, and a marker pen. Soil will be provided. “Show and Tell”, Q & A Time, Library, and afternoon tea.

3 April – Monthly Meeting and Workshop - venue: Curtin - 2pm

Our meeting will be followed by a workshop for members on taking Fuchsia Cuttings. Please bring along cuttings or a plant that can be used to take cuttings, and scissors, pots, labels and a marker pen. Soil will be provided. “Show and Tell”, Q & A Time and afternoon tea.

SUBSCRIPTION RENEWAL

Subscriptions for 2027 become due on 1 January. Please fill in the form at the back of the Journal and mail it to the Society’s postal address, PO Box 425 Curtin ACT 2605, Alternatively pay the Treasurer at the February or March meetings or via direct bank transfer.

If paying at a meeting please place your subscription in an envelope with the amount and your name on it. If you are paying by direct transfer to the Society’s bank account, please use your name as a reference.

VALE

Nancye Daley

The Society was greatly saddened to hear of the death of Nancye Daley on the 14th of July. Nancye had been an active member until her health deteriorated several years ago. She and husband Rex, who had died 18 months previously, were stalwarts of the Society joining in 1979. Nancye was a great support to Rex in growing the magnificent pelargoniums they were well known for. On the many occasions they opened their beautiful garden to members for workshops or viewing, Nancye provided delicious refreshments, and also helped with the morning and afternoon teas when Displays were held, as well as at our meetings. Her funeral service, held at St John's Church, Reid on the 4th of August, was attended by several members of the Society. Our condolences and deepest sympathies go to Nancye's family.

SEASONAL TASKS FOR FUCHSIA CARE

Monica Wraight

The fuchsia plants that have been stored over Winter will be showing signs of growth as the warm weather arrives. The following is an article by Ted Sweetman (New Zealand Fuchsia Society) that covers all one's needs for Spring growing.

For the experienced and knowledgeable growers you will all know the answers as to what you should be doing in the coming growing season, and many of our members have, I know, read it all before! Ah, but have you carried out what has been written? No? Well for our newer friends and those who need a reminder we set out some of the tasks associated with the Spring growing season.

First, let us set out the needs for growing fuchsias in containers, be they in pots, baskets, or something more elaborate. Unless you have a mature plant in a large container, you should repot your plant every year for best results, and even with a large plant, repotting each year will give you far better results and more flowers. New mix does work wonders.

Before you tackle the repotting task, check that you have an adequate supply of clean or new pots ready, and as you will be root pruning the plants, these can be the same size (or a little smaller) than the pot your plant is currently living in.

You can always move your plant into a larger container as it grows later in the season.

Tap out the plant from the pot, tease out as much of the old mix from the rooting system as you can, then prune off about 1/3 of the old root system, especially any long tap roots. Spoon some new potting mix into the bottom of the clean pot, place the plant in, spreading the roots evenly, then fill the container up to within 1 centimetre (cm) from the top, and tap lightly to settle the mix. The plant should be sitting in the mix to the same depth as it was before being disturbed. Water in lightly, and don't forget to replace the label.

Now from here you have two choices. Either you can let the plant recover and start growing before you prune the branches, or if you can protect the plant from any cold winds and frost, you can carry out pruning top and bottom at the same time. I'm lazy (but careful) and do both top and bottom at the same time.

Now for the top: first look at the shape of the plant and decide how you want it to grow, then cut away all straggly and dead twigs, leaving a framework of strong growth. Fuchsia flowers on new wood so to promote this you should cut back each of the branches by at least 2/3 of last year's growth. The cut should be made about 1cm above a leaf node. The plant may bleed a little from the cut, but will soon heal, provided that, of course, it is protected from frost and cold wind. Do not add extra fertiliser to your potting mix at this stage. If you use a commercial bark or peat mix, this will have had fertiliser blended into it and will start the plant off nicely. If you use your own mix, be sparing with the initial additives. It is much better to add your fertiliser once the plant has started growing again, as the young roots can be ruined by over-feeding.

Those showy basket fuchsias, always admired but sometimes neglected, are treated the same as any other container grown fuchsias except that they will need a little more feeding as they are growing. They definitely need new mix each year and after three years throw the plant away and replace with a new one. Pruning is virtually the same, but as a guide, trim the lead branches back to the edge of the basket and, of course, cut out weak and dead twigs. When deciding to grow a fuchsia in a basket, always choose a trailing habit plant, as the growth must always hang down to cover the side of the basket or you will lose the graceful effect. Upright fuchsias in a basket? No, No, No.

Baskets are attractive and always tempting to buy from a garden centre, but if hanging them in a patio, never put them too high up to the ceiling, and every day they should have water sprayed on the leaves. In fact, a good light hosing never goes amiss. If you can keep them out of the wind, so much the better, as their branches are quite brittle and strong winds can cause havoc.

Depending on your own particular climate, you can now start pruning your garden fuchsias, but only when risk of frost has passed, particularly for the soft foliage triphylla and other similar type plants. The same principle of pruning exists as for container grown plants. Prune back to within 1cm of a leaf node and take off at least 2/3 of last year's growth. For older plants, many growers prefer to cut away much more than this, but experience will teach you what suits best for your conditions. Cut away all weak growth and dead twigs to leave a framework of healthy stems. When pruning is completed, tidy up the ground below, removing rubbish, weeds and old leaves which have accumulated during the Winter. Lightly fork in any compost you have, but do not add any fertiliser until the plants start to shoot, and then feeding can be commenced. Keep artificial fertiliser away from the plant stem, as well as natural manure or sheep pellets. Any food at all should be lightly forked in around the plant.

Pruning time is also moving time, so any fuchsias you wish to move into another spot in your garden can be attended to at this time. Do not plant out small new plants yet, but grow them on in a container to get some size and strength before planting out. When you do plant out, make sure your fuchsias have a well-draining free root run type of soil, plenty of richness as they are gross feeders once they start growing and should have plenty of water without being soggy.

Now is also the time to take tip cuttings from your favourite plants. Spring cuttings should be taken from the new soft growth and these get away much faster than the larger hardwood cuttings. The cutting should be taken from the actual tip of the new growth, cut below the second or third set of fine leaves. Plant the small cuttings in a moist coarse grit, sand, pumice or even sawdust, one node deep, and place this container into a clear plastic bag and leave in a well-lit but not sunny position. If you have a heated propagator with temperature control, set this around 15°C and you will find that a well chosen

cutting will be showing signs of rooting within two to three weeks. Do not exceed this temperature as you will “cook” the cuttings. Without the benefit of heat, your cuttings will take a week or more longer. Do not be tempted to lift the cuttings to see if they have begun to send out roots – this can be noted by the centre of the cutting starting to look nice and fresh and, in fact, growing in size. Do not fertilise the cuttings in their starting mix.

When the cuttings have started to grow and have a nice, young root ball, carefully lift out and plant into a small pot or tube in a light, well-drained mix and again, do not add any fertiliser until the plant is well established, and even then be very sparing. When small, white roots appear at the drain holes in the pot, the plants should be potted on to a larger container, continuing this one pot size upwards as the plant grows. If you want a good, bushy plant, nip out the tiny, growing tip of the plant as soon as it is starting to grow in its first, small pot. Of course if you want to grow a standard, leave the growing tip intact and train the one stem upwards. The propagation of cuttings must be the most rewarding part of growing and enjoying our favourite plant, a pastime I never tire of. One added comment – do make sure you label your plants, won't you.

Reprinted from the Society's August 2003 Journal



HYBRID IVIES

Rex Daley

The history of the Hybrid Ivy pelargonium goes back to the middle of the 1800s and yet there is only a very small group of cultivars compared with other branches of the genus Pelargonium. These plants are a cross between an Ivy-leaved and Zonal pelargonium and have attributes of both parents.

In the US, these plants are known as “Ivy-Zonal Crosses” however in the UK and Australia they are known as “Hybrid Ivies”.

That there has not been much of a change in this small category of cultivars has much to do with the sterility of the plant.

The good news for Pelargonium lovers is that *Syngenta*, a company name in the field of Horticulture (a global Swiss Agribusiness) has been responsible for introducing a series of cultivars named:

Caliente Geraniums

Released in 2005, consisting of four colours: Coral, Rose, Red and Deep Red, all of which have a Zonal-styled leaf and a single flower. The plant “Caliente Fire” appeared in 2009 along with Lavender and Bright Coral. Pink and Orange arrived in 2010. With some of the later releases, the leaves are typical ivy leaf shape.

Calliope

Most Pelargonium lovers are now aware of the very successful release of “Big Red” and then “Big Pink” and we believe “Big Rose” and “Big Burgundy” are to follow. These plants have a semi-trailing habit, green foliage, zonal leaves and large flower heads, excellent for hanging baskets, window boxes, pots and tubs around the garden.

These new cultivars, like all the “Hybrid Ivies”, are said to be free of oedema, rust-free and generally easy to look after. They are good value, showy and easy to grow. All of these plants thrive in hot weather. It is interesting to note that the word “Caliente” means “hot” in Spanish.

NOTICE OF MEETING - AGM – SATURDAY 6 MARCH 2027

The Society’s Annual General Meeting will be held on Saturday, 6 March 2027. At the AGM, minutes from the 2026 AGM will be confirmed, reports provided by the President and Treasurer and office holders elected for 2027.

Key office holders to be elected are: President, 2 x Vice President, Treasurer and Secretary who form the Executive. In addition, other elected committee members include Membership Records, Journal Editor, Display Organiser and Program Organiser. Members can nominate and be elected as committee members without a formal role. In order to nominate you must be a financial member of the Society.

The Society’s committee always welcomes new members to keep the Society functioning. You don’t need to have a specific key role or skills but can participate as a general committee member. If you are interested in joining the committee, all offers are warmly welcomed. A nomination form is included at the end of this Journal and may be handed to the Secretary or mailed to the Society’s PO Box address.

GROWING FUCHSIAS – A FEW HINTS

Cedric Bryant

Here are a few hints on growing fuchsias, to which there is no limit to the varieties and colours available.

- In winter they lose their leaves and look like they've died. Yet within a few warm days in Spring the new shoots start appearing on the old wood. Simply trim off those branches that have not sprouted.
- They require a shady position with the sun off them by 10am in Summer. They grow well under shade cloth (75 per cent).
- In pots or baskets always use a premium potting mix. In the garden, a well-drained spot digging in some good compost and or rotted leaves, under deciduous trees or shrubs is ideal.
- Even in Winter, keep the soil and roots in pots or baskets moist. In Summer, it's usually necessary to water every day.
- If growing in a pot, raise it off the ground and don't use a saucer under the pot.
- Regularly deadhead or pinch out new shoots to encourage more flowers.

With the abundance of flowers, feed fuchsias every few weeks with a certified organic fertiliser such as Maxicrop Seaweed Nutrient or Neutrog Seamungus.

Reprinted from Cedric's gardening column, City News, November 2018, thanks to Janet Johnson for bringing in the article

HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY SHOW DATES FOR SPRING 2026

Spring Bulb and Camellia Show 19-20 September, Fitzroy Pavilion, EPIC

Iris, Rhododendron and Azalea Show 31 October-1 November, Mallee Pavilion, EPIC

Spring Exhibition and Rose Show 14-15 November, Mallee Pavilion, EPIC

Opening hours for all shows are from 10.00am to 4.00pm on Saturday and 10.00am to 3.15pm on Sunday.

The provisional dates and location for the 2027 **Autumn Show** are 6-7 March, Fitzroy Pavilion, EPIC.

See <https://hsoc.org.au/activities-and-events/#flowershows> for updates.

POTTING MIX COMPONENTS

Thank you to Richard Buker who has provided the following information on potting mix components and their uses, following his recent talk at our August meeting.

Ingredient	Provides	Key Traits	Can Be Used With
Composted bark	Structure, aeration, drainage	Long-lasting, adds organic matter & beneficial microbes; slumps over time; can lower pH	Perennials and flowering plants; cuttings (fine grade); orchids & epiphytes (coarse grade); shrubs & roses
Coir peat (also called coco peat)	Moisture, aeration, structure	Low in nutrients; lightweight; can lower pH	Seedlings; indoor plants that prefer moist conditions; tropical and sub-tropical plants
Washed sand/gravel	Drainage; weight; structure	Reduces compaction; can be too heavy	Succulents & cacti; general plants; coastal species; Mediterranean herbs; root vegies
Scoria	Drainage; aeration; bulk	Adds structure; lightweight; long-lasting	Succulents & cacti; Mediterranean herbs; plants from rocky or alpine areas; bonsai; orchids & epiphytes
Perlite	Drainage; aeration	Adds bulk; reduces compaction; lightweight; can be dusty; compacts over time	Succulents & cacti; orchids & epiphytes; indoor plants that prefer drier conditions; Mediterranean herbs
Vermiculite	Moisture	Lightweight; holds nutrients; can become soggy; may raise pH	Cuttings; ferns & moisture loving tropicals; indoor plants in dry climates
Lime	Calcium; magnesium	Raises pH level; reduces acidity; can be easy to apply too much	Lavender; geraniums & pelargoniums; sweet peas; brassicas; fruit trees; tomatoes
Fertiliser	Nutrients	Lowers or raises pH; can increase salt levels; can feed soil microbes	All plants (choose plant-specific options)

Ingredient	Provides	Key Traits	Can Be Used With
Water crystals	Moisture	Reduces watering frequency; supportive in hot/dry conditions; can cause overwatering	Hanging baskets; thirsty annuals; indoor plants that prefer moist conditions
Horticultural charcoal	Aeration	Absorbs excess moisture; traps toxins & impurities	Cacti & succulents; orchids & epiphytes; terrariums; bonsai; indoor plants
Pumice	Aeration; drainage; structure	Lightweight; long-lasting	Cacti & succulents; bonsai

PELARGONIUM 'VANCOUVER CENTENNIAL'



A beautiful specimen for a pot is dwarf stellar 'Vancouver Centennial', which was hybridised by Ian Gillam of British Columbia, Canada. It was named and introduced in honour of Vancouver's one hundredth anniversary in 1986. A golden-leaved dwarf stellar with chestnut blotches, the florets are single salmon red, with the jagged edges of a stellar. Regularly removing spent flowerheads will encourage flowering. Well worth growing.

OPEN GARDENS CANBERRA – SPRING 2026

(So much choice....)

3-4 October

'Baker Garden', 20 Wells Garden, Griffith, ACT.

Established 16 years ago on a 970sqm block, this gardener's garden includes many sculptures, stone walls and bird baths. Pine bark mulch, drippers and no lawn make it a low maintenance garden. Hidden behind a lattice are productive raised veggie beds, fruit trees, a covered potting area and composting space. The

garden has recently been modified to make it even lower maintenance and safer for its two 80-year-old owners.

10-11 October

'El's Garden', 3 Ramage Pl, Flynn, ACT.

This will be your last chance to visit El's Garden as the owners will be leaving later this year. Situated on a quarter-acre sloping corner block, it has been transformed over the past 45 years from the original heavy clay pasture and now accommodates close to 200 species of mainly native plants. Carefully selected planting in the front garden provides both colour and privacy. In the back a landscaped creek with three waterfalls feeds a pond, while a patio provides a relaxing spot to enjoy the morning sun.

24-25 October

'Vogelweide Estate', 94 Cork St, Gundaroo, NSW.

Born from a paddock 18 years ago, Vogelweide Estate has blossomed into almost two acres of unmistakably European- inspired gardens. The expansive grounds feature striking umbrella pines, junipers, maples and even a rare 5-metre Wollemi pine. Wander among more than 150 old-world roses, lush peonies, spring bulbs, fragrant Mediterranean herbs and fountain walk.

31 October-1 November

'Garden by Fleur', 16 Chapman St, Braddon, ACT.

Set in one of Canberra's oldest "garden city" suburbs, this enchanting garden is a masterclass in how to make great use of an average sized block so as to perfectly suit family living. Inside its hedges and walls you will find garden rooms, water features, outdoor living areas, murals, sculptures, productive gardens and many unusual plants and trees. You are sure to find lots of ideas and inspiration.

7-8 November

'Joan's Garden', 51 Dash Cres, Fadden, ACT.

This restful green garden has been lovingly tended by Joan for the past 40 years. An eclectic variety of plants, largely sourced from friends and family, has resulted in a very personal space. Over time trees and shrubs have grown to dominate smaller flowering plants, but this abundant greenery is enhanced in spring by delicate blossom, bulbs and irises. Come to enjoy the garden and pick

up some tips from Joan, who admits to a love of composting, pruning and growing plants in pots!

21-22 November – two gardens this weekend:

The Secret Country Garden, 9 Iora Place, Waramanga, ACT.

A beautifully layered Australian garden blending formal structure with relaxed cottage planting. Fragrant climbing roses, flowering agapanthus, formal hedges and gravel pathways weave through tranquil outdoor rooms alive with birdlife and seasonal colour. Mature gums provide shade and scale, while secluded sitting areas and ornamental features create a peaceful retreat that feels both elegant and deeply natural. The garden is beautifully laid out with distinct, themed rooms that create an ornamental and peaceful retreat. This secluded sanctuary is full of vibrant colour and thriving bird life, offering a serene escape from the outside world.

'Zhou's Sustainable Kitchen Garden', 36 Fimster Cirt, Kambah, ACT.

Dedicated to sustainable and organic gardening, this entire suburban block has been transformed into a thriving orchard, overflowing with an amazing variety of fruit trees, berry bushes, herbs, and edible plants of every kind. Lovingly cultivated for food production rather than formal landscaping, flowers, or foliage, this remarkable garden belongs to an enthusiastic professional cooking teacher. Visitors will discover plenty of inspiration for growing edibles, sustainable gardening practices, and plants that thrive in Canberra's climate.

Japanese maples, roses, dogwood trees, and colourful conifers have also been thoughtfully incorporated, adding beauty, texture, and seasonal colour throughout the garden.

All visitors are welcome. There is a \$10 entry fee for non-member adults that helps fund community grants. The gardens are open 10-4, Saturday and Sunday.

For more detailed information see the website (opengardenscanberra.org.au).

PELARGONIUM CARE OVER SPRING AND SUMMER

Joan Powell

In early October inspect your plants again to see if they have a nicely balanced shape. If not, a further light prune may be necessary. Don't forget to also inspect your hanging baskets and pinch out the growing tips to encourage branching

and to ensure a well-shaped bushy plant. However if you want to have flowering plants for display or sale at our November show **don't pinch out the growing tips after mid-August.**

Spring is also the best time to take cuttings of fancy leaved varieties but wait until the possibility of frosts are over. Repot if necessary and then move to a warm protected position. Fancy leaved varieties do not like to have wet feet so I always add extra sand to my growing medium to provide extra drainage. They will also benefit from a light dressing of blood and bone watered in with a weak solution of Seasol or Powerfeed.

Check again for any insect attack particularly whitefly, aphids, caterpillars and mites. If these pests are not brought under control at the start of the growing season it will be almost impossible to eradicate them. There are several good products available for controlling these pests. When using any chemicals ensure that you read the label and carefully follow all safety directions.

Make sure you remove dead leaves and old flower heads from potted plants and give them a quarter turn weekly. To grow a well-shaped compact plant they need to have good light and should be spaced well apart to provide good air circulation. Keep checking for signs of mildew, black rot or rust, if necessary spray with a fungicide such as Zineb or Mancozeb. Yates Zaleton is a relatively new dual action systemic fungicide and although it is a little expensive it is excellent for rust. I recently sprayed some of my Zonals with rust with excellent results. Clean used pots, growing benches and sterilise cutting implements. Good hygiene will help prevent disease spreading.

As the growing season progresses a careful watering program is essential, water early in the day and avoid wetting the foliage. The size of containers, type of potting mix and position of your plants should determine how much water is needed. I find that most potting mediums on the market benefit from the addition of perlite and/or **coarse** river sand to aid drainage [**fine** river sand remains wet for too long and should not be used].

With the onset of the hot weather good air circulation for potted plants becomes essential. Keep them healthy by removing dead flower heads and dead or diseased leaves. Remove any dieback or rot by cutting back to healthy tissue and

seal the cut with a dusting of sulphur or methylated spirits. A couple of teaspoons of sulphur powder mixed to the consistency of toothpaste with a little methylated spirits and water can be stored in a small jar and painted onto the newly cut ends with a small brush as needed.

Watch for signs of rust which is prevalent during wet, hot and humid weather. Remember this disease can spread through your whole collection very quickly. Place any infected leaves in a plastic bag and close securely before disposal. Spray infected plants and the top of the soil with a fungicide. Avoid wetting the foliage during watering.



Rust on the back of zonal pelargonium leaves

Potted plants will need some protection from the hot sun and may need to be moved or protected with some form of temporary shade. You can insulate small pots by standing them in larger containers. Larger pots can be insulated by lining them with a thick layer of newspaper.

Although it will be necessary to increase watering during very hot weather be careful not to overwater them. I find that bottom watering is the best method to use at this time of the year as the roots don't have to push their way to the surface of the pot for moisture. I place my plants on trays of pebbles, but any similar capillary method would do. Never water in the middle of the day during hot weather and remember to ensure that there is adequate air circulation between your plants.

Check for pests, particularly the caterpillars of moths and butterflies. If it is necessary to spray make sure you do so during the cooler part of the day to protect the leaves and flowers from sun damage. Continue feeding plants with a high strength potash fertiliser, at half strength, during late spring and summer.

Late February through March is the perfect time to take cuttings. Start with the regals and angels and as the weather cools in March progress to the zonals and then the ivies. Remember when taking cuttings your primary goal should be to ensure that the plant being pruned will retain a good shape for the next spring. Once your cuttings have developed roots, start pinching out the growing tips so that they develop into nice dense compact plants.

Try this remedy at the first sign of rust -

Zineb and Mancozeb are just two of the recommended fungicides to control rust, but try this method, which appeared in an edition of the Journal many years ago, as a safer alternative.

Using a small, soft brush dipped in methylated spirits, dab the rust spots on the upper and lower sides of the leaf surface, making sure not to disturb the red spores. Repeat this on the next day and then leave for a few days, then check to see what effect this has had. Often the rust will have disappeared, leaving only a mark where it had been. However, if the rust outbreak on the plant is extensive, more drastic measures will be needed, even getting rid of the plant altogether.



“What I say is, life aint all you want, but it’s all you ‘ave – so ‘ave it.

Stick a geranium in yer ‘at and be ‘appy”

Old Cockney (London) saying

FUCHSIA CARE - OCTOBER TO MARCH

Irene Brewer

OCTOBER – Turn plants in pots and baskets regularly to ensure even growth. The plant should have reached the desired shape and pinching should now cease. For plants which have single flowers, 6–8 weeks is required for the plants to produce flowers, and 8–10 weeks for plants with double blooms. Continue to fertilise your plants weekly with a half-strength liquid fertiliser, and when the

temperatures start to rise, an application of Osmocote to ensure the plants receive a regular feed. Heat is required for the Osmocote to release the fertiliser from the pellets. Now is also the time to keep aphids and whitefly at bay. Commercial products are available but you can also control aphids and whitefly by spraying plants with a solution of water and detergent or just hosing them off. Planting marigolds around fuchsias and roses can also keep aphids at bay.

NOVEMBER – If you have vigorous plants that haven't started flowering, you can take cuttings to grow on into the summer. Make sure that you have at least two sets of leaves when you take the cutting. Use a light, free draining mixture, either seed raising mixture or a combination of perlite and peat moss.

Don't despair if your plants haven't started flowering at this time. Some varieties don't commence flowering until February and the Triphyllas need a lot of light and heat to flower. So place them in full sun for part of the day to enable them to set flowers. The sun at this time of the year in Canberra won't burn the plants. Keep turning the plants for even growth.

DECEMBER - Enjoy seeing your plants grow and flower. Feed them with half-strength fertiliser weekly and watch for whitefly and thrips and spray regularly with a pyrethrum based spray, several times a week if necessary, to control the infestation and break the egg cycle. It is important to protect the plants from hot winds and afternoon sun. Move baskets and pots into shade on very hot days. Water either very early in the morning or late evening. Never water in the middle of the day when the plants are wilting. They will revive in the evening and then will benefit from watering.

JANUARY - Lightly prune plants after they have finished flowering to encourage new growth. Remove dead flowers and clean up any fallen leaves from the top of the basket or pot. Replace any lost soil and add slow release fertiliser (Osmocote or Nutricote).

Fertilise plants with a fertiliser high in potassium to promote flowering. Lightly prune and fertilise fuchsias in the garden beds. Mulch garden beds to prevent them from drying out, but keep the mulch away from the stem of the plants. Ensure plants in the shade house or glasshouse have plenty of ventilation and

treat rust promptly with a fungicide as soon as it is visible. Red spider mite will be kept at bay if the foliage of plants is misted regularly.

FEBRUARY - Plants which have been lightly pruned will be producing new growth and flowers. Other varieties which continually flower will be producing more growth. Continue to check for aphids, whitefly and red spider mite. Rust can occur if the weather is humid. Spray the plant and soil with a fungicide such as Zineb, Mancozeb or Baycor to control rot. Remove any infected leaves.

MARCH - Continue with half strength fertiliser for your pots and baskets to encourage the final flush of flowers for the end of March. March is also the ideal time to take cuttings as the weather should be cooling down. The cuttings will be well established before winter and can be potted up to the next size pot to overwinter the plant. Make sure the pot is not too big for the plant as too much excess soil around the plant will carry too much moisture during the cold winter months and the roots could freeze and the plant will die.

This recipe hasn't been tested by the Editor, but for those of you who like to bake -

CONNIE'S HERBAL SWEET CAKE

1 cup sugar	1 teaspoon baking powder
1 tablespoon butter	1 teaspoon dried, crushed (or 1 tablespoon fresh, chopped finely) Lemon Thyme or other lemony herb of your choice
1 egg, beaten	
½ cup milk	½ to 1 teaspoon dried, crushed (or 1 tablespoon fresh, chopped finely) lemon-scented pelargonium leaves
1 cup plain flour	

Preheat oven to 180°C.

Grease the bottom and sides of a 9 inch round cake pan and line the bottom with baking paper. Dust with flour.

Cream the butter and sugar, add the egg, then milk. Gradually add sifted flour and baking powder, then the herbs.

Pour the batter into the prepared pan and bake for 30 minutes.

Cool on wire rack before removing from the pan. Dust top with icing sugar if desired.

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