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HOW TO GROW A STANDARD FUCHSIA

You can purchase a 'whip' or baby standard, or take your own cutting.

The advantage of purchasing a whip is that you will already have a strong one grown from a variety which is particularly good for growing as a standard.

The advantage to taking your own cutting is that you can make a standard from any variety. The important thing to remember is that you must protect the growing tip at all costs until the whip has reached the desired height. Once a fuchsia cutting has rooted, you would normally 'pinch out' the growing tip to encourage bushy growth.

DO NOT DO THIS when growing a standard. By leaving the growing tip on the plant all of the plant's energy will go to this one tip and it will shoot upwards.

As the plant grows up, add a cane next to the stem for support & tie in when necessary with flexible ties to keep the stem straight as it thickens with maturity.

As the plant grows up the cane, check regularly, remove any lower side shoots that start to form leaving on the top four sets - do not remove the large leaves growing straight out from the main stem as these leaves carry food for the axial tip as it grows upwards. Carry on doing this until the plant reaches the required height, then pinch out the growing tip. Remove any flower buds carefully, should they begin to form, as this takes away vital energy required for the standard to grow upwards.

Our Fuchsia Whips are usually for sale supported by bamboo canes in 2L pots. Once the whip has reached the top of the cane it is time to re-pot to a 4 or 5L pot to ensure stability.

When the whip has reached its desired height, carefully remove the last side shoots leaving 3 or 4 sets of side shoots which will allow you to form the head of the standard. Grow the head in the same way that you would grow a bush, by pinching out the growing tips of all side shoots once they have grown at least 2-3" from the main stem. Continue pinching at regular intervals to create a good shape. Stop pinching by mid May for flowers to appear by mid August

OVERWINTERING A STANDARD

Trim back the head of your standard fuchsia to help with a good shape for the following year & make storing easier, & you can see when new shoots appear in the spring.

Standard fuchsias can be over-wintered in a frost free environment: a garage, shed or greenhouse. Ideally a minimum temperature of 5°C is necessary.

Many hardy fuchsias make good standards, but the fact that it is a hardy variety does not make it hardy as a standard. If a standard dies back too far, it will shoot from the base next year just as a hardy fuchsia would in your garden. Lag the standard stem with pipe lagging to protect the stem against the winter weather. It is important not to over-water the standards in winter as root rot can occur. That said, I have been told by some customers that they have over-wintered their standards outside, so - know your own garden!

Re-pot your standard with fresh compost in the spring when you see evidence of new growth, increase watering and more new growth will appear. Don't forget to feed regularly with high nitrogen feed for enhanced growth & high potash feed for enhanced flower colour. (See our info sheet on growing fuchsias month by month). Remember to pinch out the early shoots for a bushier plant thereby giving an excellent floral display.