



## **That Fussy Fuchsia**

They may look lush and beautiful in Seattle or Canada, but fuchsias are one of the most challenging plants to grow in central Indiana. Best grown where the temperature stays between 60 and 80 degrees, they don't like Indiana's hot summers. Fuchsias enjoy a cool shaded location throughout the growing season. While morning sun is fine, they suffer in the hot afternoon sun. The soil should be kept evenly moist but not saturated.

Remember that even when your plant is in the right location and properly watered, it may wilt during hot, drying conditions. When this happens, people sometimes think the plant needs water and make the mistake of overwatering it. However, the fuchsia has a built-in, protective "computer" that causes it to wilt when it begins to evaporate more water than it can take up. So the last thing you want to do is to add more water to the soil. Check first before watering. If the soil is wet, just hose or mist the plant to cool it off. If the soil actually is dry, go ahead and water your plant. Don't wait!

Because they are strong bloomers, fuchsias are heavy feeders and should be fertilized every six times you give them a drink of water. To avoid burning the plant, use a water-soluble fertilizer (like Miracle Gro) that you mix with water. Make sure the soil is moist first and try to feed early in the morning or later in the evening.

Fuchsias can be vulnerable to aphids, whiteflies and spider mites. With proper care, fuchsias can give you months of beautiful flowering. If you have any questions, just ask and we'll be glad to help.