

Overwintering Tender Plants



Geraniums and Fuchsias

When heavy frost and cold temperatures set in, cut away half of the foliage with sharp pruners. Store the plant in its pot in a cool spot I.E. an unfinished basement (7°C - 10°C); any area that will maintain this temperature is ideal. Once the plants are dormant, light is unimportant.

Water only enough to prevent the soil from becoming completely dry. If the plants were growing in the garden, carefully dig them up and shake off soil and plant into pots. Store them in the above mentioned environment.

In February, trim the stems to 1/3rd of their original height, and bring the pots into a location with lots of direct sunlight. If desired, transplant into larger pots at this time.

Normal room temperatures or slightly above are ideal (21°C - 23°C). Water just enough to moisten the soil and allow the top two thirds to dry out between waterings. Fertilize every 2 weeks with an all purpose water soluble fertilizer like 20 - 20 - 20 at half the rate recommended.



When new growth appears, fertilize every 2 weeks with 20 - 20 - 20 at full strength. Once the new shoots are 3 - 4 inches long, take cuttings from the mother plants. At this point, the original plants can be discarded (cuttings result in plants that are fuller and more vigorous).

Dip the cut end into a rooting hormone compound (#1 should suffice) and shake off the excess. Plant the cuttings in a seed starter mix. Cover with a plastic dome and keep the cuttings in a bright but indirectly lit area. Once the cuttings have a good root system (two to three weeks) the dome can be removed and they can be then transplanted into 4 inch pots and placed in a



sunny window. Be sure to turn the plants daily for even growth. This can also be done under lights as well.

On warm, sunny days (outside temps of 4°C or more) in the early spring, set the plants outside in a sheltered area, and bring them indoors before the cool of the evening. This treatment increases the amount of light they receive resulting in more vigorous growth and a more hardened off plant.

The same process can be done for fuchsias but don't take cuttings; allow the plant to grow back naturally. Top dress the plants with sterile potting mix. If the plants are root bound take them out and trim the root mass by about one third. Cuttings can be taken if you wish; follow the same instructions for doing geranium cuttings.



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