

## Fuchsia News Spring 2020

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

Dear All

As usual a few notes before we start!

It is a really strange time that we are living through, but I am certain that gardening and growing things generally is helping a lot of people. I know that for me being able to be outside helps no end. I am certain that it will be the same with many of your members. Please feel free to use any article from any edition of Fuchsia News – they are there for your newsletters etc.

At this time no one knows if we will be able to hold our shows but I, like many am growing my plants as if there will be shows later this year. If there aren't we will at least have wonderful plants to look at and enjoy – we can always do displays or similar events to let others see our plants!

### A message from Derek

#### Mental wellbeing while staying at home.

<https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/coronavirus-covid-19-staying-at-home-tips/>

“Taking care of your mind as well as your body is really important while staying at home because of coronavirus (COVID-19).

You may feel bored, frustrated or lonely. You may also be low, worried or anxious, or concerned about your finances, your health or those close to you.

It's important to remember that it is OK to feel this way and that everyone reacts differently. Remember, this situation is temporary and, for most of us, these difficult feelings will pass. Staying at home may be difficult, but you are helping to protect yourself and others by doing it.

The tips and advice here are things you can do now to help you keep on top of your mental wellbeing and cope with how you may feel while staying at home. Make sure you get further support if you feel you need it.”

Other headings on this NHS website that you might find useful:

1. [Find out about your employment and benefits rights](#)

2. [Plan practical things](#)

3. [Stay connected with others](#)

4. [Talk about your worries](#)

5. [Look after your body](#)

6. [Stay on top of difficult feelings](#)

7. [Do not stay glued to the news](#)

8. Carry on doing things you enjoy

9. Take time to relax

10. Think about your new daily routine

11. Look after your sleep

12. Keep your mind active

These are all important aspects to consider in helping us get through this difficult time.

Bearing in mind all those headings there is no better place to communicate with friend and family than the internet. I keep in contact with friends and family by different means depending on the facility that they have.

The basic being the telephone, is there someone you know who lives on their own? You might be surprised how a call would cheer them up, not forgetting Royal mail or Emails. I use Messenger, Zoom, WhatsApp and Skype, all of these enables you to see each other.

Other communication can take place using Twitter or FaceBook. I prefer Facebook and since the lockdown a new Facebook Group "The British Fuchsia Society" was started and has gained 171 members.

Another new group is "Fuchsia Friends Gossip" which at the time of writing has 148 members and this is a place to share anything that you like, ask questions, give advice or to find a shoulder to cry on, hopefully just with laughter.

Fuchsia Friends Gossip is not under the jurisdiction of the BFS although many are members, it is a place for likeminded people can as the title suggests, gossip. How to or not to take cuttings, photos of greenhouses and gardens. jokes and anything else that crosses your mind. Do not sit at home and fret.

If you need help that you think I can assist you with my telephone number is 01202 879735, Email [wincombe@gmail.com](mailto:wincombe@gmail.com)

Keep safe Derek Luther

## **Arthur's Articles**

### **Bushy the Fuchsia:**

My life all started when one day a person came along and snipped me off as a growing tip from my parent and placed me along with many other such tips in a damp pot of what appeared to be potting soil and perlite. The pot was then placed on what to me seemed like a warm surface. Then we were all sprayed with a nice tepid liquid, which seemed very pleasant. As the time passed, I could detect a strange feeling in myself and I started to feel these fury like growths attaching to me and I began to feel vigorous and vibrant and I started to grow. Looking around me I saw that all the other "tips" were starting to get bigger stronger and taller. I then realised that I was doing likewise.

Soon the person came along, and I heard "my goodness these are doing well, time to pot them on". At that we were all tipped out of the pot and our roots were carefully separated and I was carefully placed in a pot of damp potting compost all on my own. I started to feel very lonely at first being separated from all of my mates, but I soon started to get that feeling of vigour and vitality again and started to make growth of my own, my vigour and vitality was helped by the kind person giving me a regular drink of a weak nitrogen feed that certainly helped me to grow. It was not too long afterwards, when I had grown about three pairs of leaves that the person came and removed my growing tip. I felt very upset at that as I now could not grow any taller and I so wanted to be a nice tall plant. With my growing tip removed, all my efforts went into growing my side branches, which as the person turned me around a quarter turn every morning, these started to grow very evenly.

After a while the person came along and took out all the growing tips of my branches, which I felt was very unkind. So, all I could do now was to grow the branches on my truncated branches. I was putting all my efforts into doing this and I began to feel rather restricted in my root system. There was very little room for my roots to expand so it was making it difficult to grow my subbranches. Then the person came along and tipped me out of my pot, this I thought was very unkind, but even worse the person started to probe among my roots removing some of the compost along with a few of my roots. Then the person put a small amount of compost into the bottom of the pot I had just been tipped from, placing me carefully back into it, ensuring I was fairly central then filled the space around with nice fresh compost, giving me and the fresh compost a nice gentle watering placed me back on the bench.

The nice person continued to give me a nice drink of weak nitrogen feed and turn me quarter turn every day which was very kind. My subbranches were now growing with the same vigour and vitality as before, when the person came along and snipped out the growing tips all over, removing every single one that I had lovingly produced. This I found very mean and now had to start growing more branches and things were started to become a little crowded with all these extra branches. I was also starting to get the old restricted feeling again and my efforts at growing were slowing, when the person came and removed me from the bench and tipped me out of my pot again. This time however he produced a slightly larger pot and using

my old pot as a template filled the space between the two pots with compost, removed my old pot and placed me in the position my old pot had just vacated. When I was put back on the bench I was given a nice gentle watering and was soon feeling good again, with the regular weak nitrogen feed and turning I began to feel quite good about life and was beginning to look quite the bush fuchsia.

The nice person later again came and removed all of my growing tips again! This was becoming very upsetting, but later after I had started to grow even *more* subbranches I was removed from the bench. Just as I was starting to get that restricted feeling the person came along and tipped me out of my pot, this I thought was very unkind, but worse the person again started to probe among my roots removing the compost along with a few of my roots. Then the person but a small amount of compost into the bottom of the pot I had just been tipped from, placing me carefully back into it, ensuring I was fairly central then filled the space around with nice fresh compost, giving me and the fresh compost a nice gentle watering placed me back on the bench.

Back on the bench the nice kind person continued to give me this nice drink of weak nitrogen feed and turn me quarter turn every day which was very kind. My subbranches were now growing with that vigour and vitality as before, when the person came along and snipped out the growing tips all over removing everyone I had lovingly produced. This I found very mean and now had to grow more. The removal from my pot and being potted into a larger pot was repeated once more and the growing tips were removed one more time. I then started to get that restricted feeling and thought I was going to die with nowhere for my roots to go. The growing of branches had now stopped, and a change came over me and instead of growing branches I started to grow these funny globular things the person called buds.

With the growing of these buds my nice weak nitrogen feed was changed to a weak potash feed and the person started to remove some of the earlier buds I had produced, this was carried out until I was covered with an even covering of buds all of the same size. When all of these buds opened, and they did all more or less at the same time. I was covered with an even covering of *Flowers* which seemed to please the person. I was taken along to a show and placed on a bench with many others of the same type and colour. My Person seemed very pleased because for some reason I had been given a **card**

*Thanks, Arthur, for the view of the world from a confused fuchsias point of view!!*

### **Overwintering in the USA:**

When we purchased our house in Port Angeles on the Olympic Peninsular in Washington State the property had an existing "Quonset" shaped fibreglass greenhouse which had wooden troughs that had been used for growing potatoes and tomatoes.



**The greenhouse as it was.**

Both troughs were cleaned of soil and this was used to fill the raised vegetable beds with the water table being fairly high. The trough on the right looking from the doorway was completely removed to give more space. The empty trough on the left of the doorway is being used to overwinter the fuchsias, potting space plus other things.

Most of the fuchsias have been grown in wall boxes. They are wooden boxes approximately 8 inches square (Americans still use imperial measure) with a back to hang it from a nail. So, to overwinter the fuchsias they were just cut back and left in the wooden boxes, then placed in the wooden trough and covered with horticultural fleece (two layers) and given a little water throughout the winter. The Greenhouse is heated with a one-kilowatt electric heater which can only provide background heat, the temperature in the greenhouse over the period fell to around 28 deg F.

When we were back in late February, we removed the fleece and found that all the fuchsias were in growth and doing well. It was the intention to repot them into fresh compost, but we only got as far as stopping them all, intending to carry out the repotting when we return in late May, but this is now in doubt thanks to the Covid-19 virus.

We found that there were three fuchsias that had not been given any protection at all, just left on the middle table. Every one of these was shooting growth, which surprised us having no protection at all from November to February.

## **John's Ramblings**

We are living in very strange times now and I think all of us are suffering from a sense of disconnection and uncertainty. Firstly, let me pass on my best wishes to all of you, I hope you are all keeping yourselves safe and the same with your family and friends.

It has been a strange year so far with many affiliated societies cancelling meetings at least until the end of May and some have already cancelled their shows. Even more important this means the ability to meet and socialise and discuss our favourite plant have been very limited. Even the British Fuchsia Society has had to cancel its AGM and early meetings. Many big national flower shows have been cancelled as well. Locally the Clevedon Flower show which is usually over the August Bank Holiday weekend has been cancelled.

This is where social media, of which I must admit, I have not been much of a fan, comes into its own in helping us keep in contact. If you haven't seen it Derek and Carol have created a new page "Fuchsia Friends Gossip" which is worth a look. Anyway, I am going to carry on growing my plants as I normally would and see what happens. If things go on for a long time, then I will have a very colourful garden with everything bedded out! I will try to stop the plants for shows as I normally would and should any of the early shows I do be cancelled then I will stop the plants again to try and get better plants for the later shows and displays.

I am continuing my tests with growing plants in Melcourt SylvaGrow peat free compost, mixed with the same proportion of Cornish grit and Perlite as I use in my peat-based compost. This compost is quite free draining, so I am not sure it is completely necessary. I have about 10 plants which have been in the compost for 2 years. Most have survived well though a plant of Hawkshead which was shooting quite well just curled up and died. Some have not needed any potting back with quite good new root growth in the old compost and I haven't so far noticed as much vine weevil in these post as the others. These I will just pot on to a larger size pot when needed. I am also trying to start some new plants in this compost, including trying some new mini standards and trained shapes, and some varieties which I like, which have never grown very well for me in my normal compost. All the plants in this compost have a green label so when potting on I can use the correct mix.

Finally, I have grown a few twisted stem standards over the last 3-4 years and though I would try and describe the technique I use. To start you need to choose two identical cuttings of the variety you want to try. Choose a variety which has pliable growth, not one which is stiff and brittle. There is no advantage to using 3 leaf cuttings here so just use the normal ones with opposite pairs of leaves. Pot up the two cuttings with the stems quite close together in a 3" pot. If you grow your cuttings in plugs like me, you may need to remove a bit of compost on the facing sides of the plug. Insert a narrow thin round cane between the cuttings which is tall enough for the height you wish to grow it. It should be totally round in profile and as thin as possible. Kebab sticks are quite good! Allow the cuttings to grow and treat as you would with a normal standard, potting on when the roots start to wrap around the base of the pot and removing the lowest side-shoots but not the leaves. Feed only with weak high nitrogen feed. When the growth is tall enough start to encourage the stems to twist around the central cane applying some ties to keep them in place until they hold their shape. Try and keep the growing tips on opposite sides of the cane 180° apart and the spacing between the turns in the stem equal. When it reaches the height you want, allow the growing tips to make two to three pairs of side shoots and pinch out the growing tips. The last twist in the stem will need a strong external tie around it to keep the stem together or the stems will tend to untwist.

Next comes the trickiest part. At some point you need to remove the central cane when the plant is strong enough but before the stems grip the cane so hard it is difficult to pull it out. Once this is achieved make a tripod of canes on the outside of the stems to hold the plant up until it becomes self-supporting. Carry on building the head to get the basic shape but don't grow it to big in the first year, instead let it flower, the cut back and grow the head more in subsequent years. I have found it takes about 3 years until the stem starts to look right and you lose the air gaps between the stems.

So far, I have tried 3 different ones, Auntie Jinks as a mini, President George Bartlett as a quarter and Winter's Tale as a half. Anything that has good pliable growth should grow well with this method of training. Brutus and Shelford might be the next I try if I grow another.

## **Plant Passports**

This is new EU wide legislation that was introduced on the 14<sup>th</sup> December 2019 in the UK which obliges all individuals or organisations selling plants via distance selling to register for and issue plant passports. What is "distance selling" I hear you ask? Well this is essentially any plants you order from a supplier via the phone, via their website or even completing a form and posting to a supplier, who subsequently sends the plants to you via the post or some other delivery method such as a courier. Most importantly these regulations do not apply if you are buying the plants "face to face" i.e. at a nursery, garden centre or even at a show where you can see what you are buying. That said you may find that some of these plants have the plant passport printed on the plant label. The regulations even apply to organisations moving plants from one site to another if they are more than a certain distance apart. Essentially, the regulations are to provide traceability and assurance they are not carrying pests/diseases. There are even more restrictions on certain plant types within certain EU zones.

To register the supplying nursery must register with APHA (Animal & Plant Health Agency) and separately register to obtain authority to issue plant passports. Their site must be inspected, which they must pay for, then the inspectors assess how frequently they need to visit in the future (which also needs to be paid for!).

So how does this affect the genus we are most concerned with? After being alerted about it by Roualeyn Nursery via Geoff Oke, we spent 45 minutes at the BFS Standing Committee Meeting at the beginning of February and another 30 minutes at the Committee Meeting at the end of February discussing this and to a certain extent going around in circles.

After the standing committee meeting, I emailed all the fuchsia nurseries who advertise with us and supply plants by mail order, asking if they were aware of the regulations and if so, what were they doing about it. Two of the nurseries did not know anything about it. We were very grateful to Sarah Clare of Potash Nursery, who is the secretary of the Horticultural Exhibitor's Association who sent us some very interesting information relating to the BFS.

Some believed these rules applied to any plants being posted even if they were sent FOC (Free of Charge). However, all the information I read on this it was always related to distance selling. Then I read an article by Gwen Ward in the Spring edition of the Pelargonium Society bulletin.

### **Plant Passports**

**Gwen Ward**

*PAGS Spring Magazine 2020 p4-5*

*Those of you who are on social media will probably have seen reference to this on your favourite plant page, or even spotted the piece in the February edition of RHS Garden Magazine.*

*There are a lot of conflicting news items about the new laws and how it will affect the hobbyist grower, so I will try to set out what I know about this, so far.*

*A new law came into effect on December 14th 2019 and affects all of us who grow and sell, or gift our spare plants/cuttings, regardless of whether we sell at our garden gate or by mail. You may well see them appearing on plants you buy at your local garden centre or nursery.*

*The Government department responsible for implementing this is APHA (Animal and Plant Health Authority). The reason: To control the spread of pests and diseases.*

*Under the new Plant Health Regulations 2016/2013 (PHR) the number of plants requiring a plant passport will be greater than before. PHR includes, as far as it concerns us as pelargonium and geranium growers, "All plants for planting". This applies to each and every one of us, not just nurseries, if we are moving plants around the country by post.*

*in England and Wales - Scotland and Northern Ireland have slightly different systems.*

*All those of us who sell plants as a hobby, for ourselves to supplement our income/pension, or for charity are affected and will have to comply with the regulations.*

*This means that every plant moving around the country has to have a Plant Passport (PP).*

*So, if you sell plants, extra cuttings, etc. through eBay, Etsy, etc., swap plants through Plant Swap Social Media pages, and post those plants by mail, then you will need to be Registered. You will also need to go through an Authorisation process, which means your plants at your home will need to be inspected. As far as I can see this will be an annual inspection. This is also very costly as the grower will have to pay for the inspection.*

*If you grow plants and sell face to face, at your garden gate, at boot fairs, then you need to be Registered, but the plants do not need to have a Plant Passport.*

*You will also be required, in each case, to keep records for three months of each plant that you sell.*

*To sum up:*

*If you sell face to face, e.g. at boot fairs, from your garden gate, locally, or gift plants to local fetes, etc. then you need to be Registered, but do not need to issue a PP.*

*If you sell your excess plants and send them through the post within the UK, then you will need to be Registered, have Authorisation and issue a Plant Passport for each plant.*

*The PP needs to conform to the EU standard and be attached to each plant.*

*So, if you have read this far and are sobbing quietly or raging at "Authority", I would agree that this whole thing is a nightmare, contradictory and open to vast interpretation.*

*The Directives seems to change daily and from area to area*

*Although this is an EU Directive and we left the EU on 31st January 2020 this will remain as it is until 31st December 2020. The likelihood is that it will remain after December 2020, but hopefully revised to take into account the hobbyist grower and seller.*

*We will keep you informed of any changes through our monthly Newsletter and this magazine. You can read the Directive here <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/issuing-plantpassports-to-trade-plants-in-the-eu>*

Though I thought the article puts the position quite clearly there were one or two things I was not totally sure about. Therefore, decided to call APHA and see what I, as an individual needed to do.

After a few attempts I got through to an Adrian Spencer who was very helpful. I explained that I was an enthusiast who grew fuchsias and sold the excess at talks I gave or shows I attended. I also said that from time to time I sent cuttings of plants by post FOC to fellow enthusiasts. He said that if I did not sell plants via the postal service (Distance Selling), I did not need to be authorised to issue plant passports. However, I should be registered with them. I then explained the situation with the British Fuchsia Society, that we had a free plant distribution to members where you could choose to collect plants from a nursery or pay to have them posted to you. The plants that were posted were bought in as plugs with a plant passport and then posted out to those members. He said that should be OK but recommended we make a copy of the supplier's plant passport and enclose it with each pack sent out.

I then registered myself with APHA and discovered in the email I got with the registration that records need to be kept for 3 years but I only need to record plants I buy in and resell. For me, that is almost non-existent as I raise most of the plants myself! The only plants that this might apply to is our local society plants for our members classes in the shows, where I source the plants and resell face to face to the members.

So, if you do sell any plants by post you need to adhere to the regulations but as Gwen states that this would be uneconomic for private enthusiasts and possibly for smaller nurseries as well.

*As John says the situation and information is not clear!*

It is always good to hear of a success story and after the last edition of Fuchsia News I received the following from one of our Affiliated Societies!

### **Princess Alexandra honours local Horticultural Society**

Princess Alexandra, accompanied by the Lord Lieutenant of Buckinghamshire, presented the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service to Stoke Poges, Wexham and Fulmer Horticultural Society at the Old Barn, Wexham Court Primary School, Slough on Thursday 20 February.

The Award is the highest a voluntary group can receive in the UK It is "for passing horticultural knowledge and tradition from generation to generation since 1884"

90 people aged between 6 and 95 were present at the celebratory party, including pupils from three primary schools, Wexham Court, Stoke Poges and Fulmer Infant School.

Jon Homan, President Emeritus said "It is a great honour to have been presented with this prestigious award. It marks a momentous and unique occasion in our Horticultural Society's history and recognises the breadth of voluntary work which the Society does in the community by helping to promote the education and improvement of horticulture for the public benefit. Today we pay tribute to those, both past and present, whose enormous contribution has made this possible."

The Chairman, Mrs Ruth Rooley added "I am absolutely delighted for everyone involved. Gardening is known to improve health and well-being, wherever you live, whatever your age. It can be a most rewarding career or a very satisfying hobby."

Sir Henry Aubrey-Fletcher commented "As Lord-Lieutenant I have the privilege, together with a number of my Deputy Lieutenants, to review the nominations made for organisations based in Buckinghamshire and to make comments. However, the decision as to who should receive the award is made by HM the Queen on the advice of a minister supported by a national expert's panel. In our view the organisation is meticulously run, and its financial position is secure. The Plant Sale and the Annual Show are well organised, and the competitions scrupulously regulated and adjudicated. This entirely voluntary society is an outstanding example of a group dedicated to improving the lives of all in the locality regardless of age, ethnicity, faith or ability and they fully deserve their award."

The Society held its 126<sup>th</sup> Annual Show in July 2019, it predates the Chelsea Flower Show. There has been a show every year except during World War I and II. It remains a traditional community show with a large marquee to hold over 700 entries in a variety of classes, vegetables, fruit, flowers, home economics, arts and crafts, photography. There is a large children's section, a Primary Schools Cup, a Cup for 16 to 18-year-olds, Cups for gardening initiatives in the community - allotments, best front garden, most colourful pub; there is a brass band, classic car display, entertainment for children, trade and other stalls of interest - something for all ages. The Society has just over 300 members. Other activities include a Spring Plant Sale, lecture evenings and outings where appropriate.

### **Queen's Award for Voluntary Service**

Stoke Poges, Wexham and Stoke Poges Horticultural Society is one of 281 charities, social enterprises and voluntary groups to receive the prestigious award in 2019, 10 are in Buckinghamshire. The number of nominations and awards has increased year on year since the awards were introduced in 2002, showing that the voluntary sector is thriving and full of innovative ideas to make life better for those around them. It is the MBE for volunteer groups, the highest Award given to groups across the UK

### **Bits and Pieces – plundered from old Fuchsia News editions!**

#### **Dealing with very hot days! (from an Australian newsletter)**

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 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.

*Certainly food for thought – do you have any tips for getting plants through the summer?!*

### **The Fuchsia Blether – by Patrick Vickery**

One Summer holiday (South of England, Hampshire) I met a man called Percy. Percy was a fuchsia man, you know, a fuchsia hobbyist, a fuchsia expert, a fuchsia obsessive, his garden stocked with every conceivable type and variety, so we returned home with fuchsias by the armful - Alice Hoffman, Mrs. Popple, Eva Boerg, Heinrich Heinkel, Nicola Jane, Winston Churchill, Uncle Charlie and too many others to mention.

I decided I would grow standard fuchsias, you see, elegant plants with a bare main stem, three or four foot in height and topped with a canopy of delicate leaves and flowers, umbrella-like in appearance perhaps if you've never seen one before. (Standard fuchsias sell for a fortune, you know, a gold mine if you know what you're doing)

So, we bought a greenhouse, six foot by four, took fuchsia cuttings, potted them and then awaited healthy growth. 'Standard Fuchsia Man', that was me!

Fuchsias, of course, are not hardy enough to withstand a raw Highland winter, so a paraffin heater was acquired in anticipation of the frosty nights to come.

Summer passed to Autumn, Autumn to Winter, and hardly a night went by when the heater wasn't on. I checked them daily, morning and night, to guard against frost damage and sprayed regularly with diluted washing up liquid to keep aphid infestation at bay. Things were looking good. And then the storm came. Not as bad as the storm of '87, of course, but powerful enough to inflict considerable damage all the same. The following morning, I realized that I'd left the greenhouse door open, barely an inch or so, but enough to blow out five panes of glass. The fuchsias survived but it was a narrow escape.

I should have replaced the glass immediately, of course, I know that now, but more pressing matters demanded my attention. The storm had gusted soot down the chimney and into our front room, you see, so it seemed like a good idea to deal with this problem first. The chimney needed a good clean, that was all, before further gustings descended upon us.

So, I bought rods and a brush from the hardware shop and prepared myself for action. 'Chimney Sweep Man', that was me. Only I had a problem. No matter how hard I pushed and prodded the brush wouldn't go up the chimney. A metal bar - something to do with the back boiler central heating, something like that - blocked my route.

Now a couple of months before I'd watched my neighbour stand on the roof of his house and clean his chimney by feeding the brush down the way. He must have encountered the same problem as me, I reasoned, obviously, obviously, and so I clambered precariously onto the roof myself, just like him, and shoved my brush down the way. This is not as easy as it sounds, you know, for you have to screw the rods together whilst stuffing the brush down the chimney, and all the while retain a good balance as well.

And so it was then, teetering precariously on the roof, that I detected movement in the greenhouse below. I didn't pay it much attention at the time, of course, preoccupied as I was, but later - when checking on the fuchsias - I was met by a devastating sight. Rabbits! My fuchsias had been eaten by rabbits! Still in their pots of course, still recognizable as fuchsias, but chewed, bitten and savaged beyond commercial viability and all because I hadn't replaced the greenhouse glass immediately. A disaster, it was, and one that called for vast quantities of home-made wine (pea-pod wine to be exact, a strange alcoholic concoction with a vivid aroma of old sock and mouldy peas) and a philosophical frame of mind to come to terms with.

Anyway, that was to be my one and only venture into the world of standard fuchsias. Now I grow only one type of fuchsia in my garden, the frost hardy Fuchsia 'Magellanica' which is capable of withstanding anything that nature can throw at it, even the odd rabbit or two, and requires little attention beyond a radical spring pruning.

### **In 2005 we asked – why do you grow fuchsias!**

I grow fuchsias because...

- I enjoy the challenge of growing and the friendship gained from joining a society
- My wife says that that I am Soft! But I say what other plant is so beautiful and versatile!
- I like them and they are easy to propagate
- They are easy to grow, very rewarding and a wonderful range of colours and flowers
- I enjoy the growing and I have met many friendly people from all parts of the UK
- I got hooked and like a fish out of water I seem unable to get off the hook
- They can present a challenge; you can have them in bloom about 9 months of the year. We love the flowers and consider that there are very few plants who can rival them
- I find that it is very therapeutic when I am attending them. There are so many different ones and they lift my spirits.
- They smell nice
- If you grow fuchsias you have year round hobby and they take over your life, holidays are put on hold till the shows are over and her indoors gets upset but it is a lovely hobby and you don't get drunk down the greenhouse!
- I don't but my husband does – I am here to keep the society going
- I like them!
- Of the varieties and the beautiful individuality of the flowers and plants
- Once you have started you will never stop
- It is the best hobby in the world!
- It was my late fathers favourite flower
- Well actually I don't, but my husband does because I like them!
- I can't forget how to, or remember not to

- It seems that so many other people with the “disposition” also grow fuchsias
- I can remember and pronounce their names, well most of them anyway
- They are easy to grow, versatile, beautiful flowers and colour combinations
- They have become part of my life and I just enjoy trying to produce a good plant plus the excitement of seeing new varieties bloom
- If you are willing to give them the time they will give you the pleasure
- I have a terminal condition called “Fuchsiatits” from which there is no remedy save growing more and more fuchsias. I blame my Mother in law for this as she was the one who introduced me to the fuchsia. This is my excuse whenever the wife complains about the fuchsias.
- I’m mad!
- They have given me a hobby that I am successful at and they have given me the chance to make many new friends
- The secretary has to practice what she preaches
- I just love fuchsias, there are so many to choose from and so many things that you can do with them
- I am mad, crackers or anything else along those lines....no I am a fuchsia fanatic!
- I love the flowers and I like the people
- I have grown them for 40 years, but it is not easy to grow them 1250’ up on the Pennines
- I love ‘em
- I sometimes wonder!
- You are never alone with a fuchsia!

### **Why, Why, Why**

Why do we press harder on a remote control when we know the batteries are getting weak?

Why does someone believe you when you say there are four billion stars, but check when you say the paint is wet?

Why doesn't glue stick to the bottle?

Why doesn't Tarzan have a beard?

Why does Superman stop bullets with his chest, but ducks when you throw a revolver at him?

Whose idea was it to put an "S" in the word "lisp"?

Why is it that no matter what colour bubble bath you use the bubbles are always white?

Why do people constantly return to the refrigerator with hopes that something new to eat will have materialized?

Why is it that no plastic bag will open from the end on your first try?

How do those dead bugs get into those enclosed light fixtures?

Why is it that whenever you attempt to catch something that's falling off the table you always manage to knock something else over?

Keep growing your fuchsias, plus keep well and safe

Carol, Arthur and John