

Gray Barn Green Thumb Guide



Hardy Fuchsias



Hardy fuchsias are spectacular plants that offer endless flowers. These beauties can vary in height from a short groundcover to a seven-foot-tall shrub! Their blooms come in an array of colors. Aside from their pretty flowers, fuchsias are a favorite hummingbird plant! To enjoy hardy fuchsias year after year, they like a little bit more care than your average perennial. Any extra effort that you put into them will be rewarded.

Plant Selection

There are a handful of things to remember and look for when choosing a hardy fuchsia:

- **Zone:** When looking at the tags on a hardy fuchsia, check and see which zone the plant is hardy to. This will tell you if the plant will survive in our climate. We garden in a zone 8. Look for fuchsias that are a zone 8 or lower. The lower the zone, the cooler temperatures the plant can handle
- **Leaf:** Look at the leaf. A bigger leaf means the plant is going to be more sensitive to cooler temperatures. The smaller the leaf, the tougher the plant.
- **Flower Size:** The bigger or more unique looking the flower, the more tender the plant will be. You want to choose a plant with a flower that is small, two to three inches long and skinny.

Planting

This step is the most important. When you plant your hardy fuchsia, plant it three to four inches deeper than it was in the pot. This will stimulate root growth along the buried stem, creating a stronger plant that can survive colder temperatures better. **DO NOT** use this method on other plants, most will rot. Also make sure to plant your fuchsia in well draining soil and where it will get four to five hours of good sun.

Maintenance

Fertilize your hardy fuchsia in March or April when you see new growth on the plant. Like fuchsias in hanging baskets, you'll need to pull off the green seed pods that will remain on the plant after the petals have fallen off. Remove these in order to deadhead the plant and stimulate new buds. Lastly, hardy fuchsias are not your typical perennial. They form woody stems, which after a mild winter, they will leaf back out on. Do not prune these branches in the fall like other perennials. This will allow water to get into the branches and rot the plant. Do any needed pruning in the spring once you see new growth. In most years, that new growth will come from the base of the plant. At this point you'll be able to prune out those old branches.