

## Fuchsia News January 2014

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Dear All

When I started this edition in January 2013 I commented on the snow and the cold – this year is quite different, lots and lots of rain and minimal frosts! It is what keeps us on our toes.

As usual a few points before we get to the main part of Fuchsia News:

- Please feel free to use anything that is within Fuchsia News for your own use – it is produced for that purpose!
- Like all editors, I am always on the lookout for articles – they do not have to be written specifically for us to use, but if you have had something in your group newsletter that you think is suitable then please forward it onto me. It is better to have too much rather than too little! My thanks to all those who send in their newsletters I always thoroughly enjoy reading them! The more the merrier so any other Societies that can pop me one in the post or by email – it would be great.
- Don't forget that now is a good time to renew! Renewing your affiliation - it makes my life easier if it is not done in a rush later in the year. I do try and get renewals processed with in the week now that Christmas is past!.
- My thanks to all those who have already renewed I am in the process of updating the website with your information – before handing it on to John Nicholass for the new Affiliated Society Directory.
- Individual memberships can now be done via the website using paypal etc
- Shows – please let me know the dates/ venues of your shows so that I can publish the normal list later in the year. I will also update your entry on the Society website
- Don't forget we are now on Facebook
- Thank you to all the Societies that have opted to take part in the insurance scheme – your certificate will be with you shortly.

### Top Ten 2013

#### 2012

- 1 London 2000
- 2 Lillian Annetts
- 3 Ernie
- 4 Alison Patricia
- 5 Brookwood Belle
- 6 Shelford
- 7 Rose Fantasia
- 8 Wigan Peer
- 9 June Marie Shaw
- 10 Pink Fantasia

#### 2013

- Shelford
- Lynne Patricia
- Alison Patricia
- London 2000
- Lillian Annetts
- Wigan Peer
- Ernie
- Brookwood Belle
- Ashville
- Sophie Louise

Last year we had a runaway winner with London 2000, this year it was incredibly close with only 15 points between the top eight. It is many years since Shelford has had such a good year – perhaps the weather was just right.. Last year I commented that just outside the Top Ten were Lynne Patricia, Paula Jane and Ashville. Lynne Patricia, a double, did particularly well and has both great flowers and is easy to grow. Ashville also had a good year and is a single with upward looking flowers. The various show winning cultivars were down to about 250 which was considerably less than

2012 – the weather no doubt being the main reason for the changes. Compiling the results we did notice the increase of unnamed or unknown fuchsias possibly because of the increase of nice plugs etc being sold by supermarkets and other national outlets! I did start making a note of these unknown fuchsias – don't worry they haven't got as far as the top ten yet!

The 3 ½” pot classes produced the usual collection of small flowered fuchsias. Border Raider was the winner in 2013 again. The others in the top 5 were – Alison Patricia, Sophie Louise, Angela King and London 2000. Just outside the top five were Twunny, Ernie and Andrew Hadfield. Just under 140 different cultivars were show in these classes showing the wide range of small flowered possibilities that can be grown – some being old favourites and others brand new.

In the baskets and hanging pots, it was again much as usual with Waveney Gem closely followed by Sylvia Barker and after a gap there were Putt's Folly, Janice Ann and Time After Time. Time After Time is one that I have never grown but after seeing its success in 2013 – it is one that I will be looking out for. The top five were close again this year but the numbers of different cultivars was down to just under 100

This year I thought that we would investigate show wining fuchsias grown as standards. and all I really can tell you that for the purposes of showing – anything goes! So my list was a combination of the well-recognized show fuchsias to those that must have proved more of a challenge!

Finally my thanks to all the Show managers and their volunteers that compile the results on such a busy day – I couldn't keep this project going for so many years without you!

### **Arthur's Articles!**

#### **Fuchsia Basics:**

While reading the excellent BFS Publication *All About Fuchsias*, which is in the process of being re-written to bring the publication up to date, I began to realise that there are some basic subjects of fuchsia growing that I think might be beneficial in setting down to remind the established grower, and help the beginner.

Let us start with the first step, Propagation: When taking soft wood fuchsia cuttings, where do we start? The first step is to ensure that your parent plant is well watered. This needs to be done about two to three hours before you start removing the cutting material. This will allow the water to reach the very tips of the plant. Why? Because all the cutting will have to keep it alive when severed from the parent, is all the moisture it has received from the parent, until it can form roots and commence taking up water itself. While we are waiting for the plant to distribute its moisture all around, then we can prepare our cutting mix into which we intend to root our cuttings. I use ordinary potting compost mixed with Perlite with an 80% Compost 20% Perlite mix. This is well mixed together to ensure the Perlite is spread evenly through the mix and to work out all of the larger lumps in the compost so that we end up with a very fine tilth. Water should now be added carefully and worked into the mix until a handful of the mix when squeezed together will just hold together without moisture dripping out.

With our mixture at just the right consistency we can select our container into which we intend to plant our cuttings. This needs to be fairly shallow in depth, because if the container is too deep, the compost in the bottom of the container will become sour and the roots will not grow into it. I have tried many different containers ranging through; empty margarine tubs with drainage holes, 3½in half pots, through to seed trays, full or half dependant on quantity of cuttings being taken, but in the majority of cases now I use a 2in square pot.

Now that we have our mix in the desired containers and our parent plant fully turgid, we can now commence taking our cuttings. To sever the cutting material from the parent I have two instruments of choice; a pair of small nail scissors with curved blades, or the one thing I always have with me, my thumb nail. But any sharp cutting instrument: for instance a hobby knife, a scalpel, or a small bladed penknife. I only take tip cuttings for two main reasons. Firstly all of the hormones of the plant are found in the growing tips. Secondly only using 2in square pots, it increases the number I can get in the pot. I take my cutting above a leaf node and take just the tip and one pair of leaves. With the required cutting removed I fold the leaves up so that they are just above the growing tip and crop the ends. Doing this has two benefits; it reduces the area of transpiration, meaning your cutting will lose less moisture. Also it means less chance of leaves touching each other when planted in my pot. If the leaves do touch each other this can lead to botrytis. In my 2in pot my desired number is nine cuttings. Three rows of three, this being my optimum. To plant the cuttings in the compost I make a small hole in the compost using a sharpened split cane. Then insert the cutting. With the cuttings now planted, where do we put them? There are many options. We can place a single pot in an inverted coffee jar and place it in a well-lit area but somewhere it will not be scorched by the sun. This will give it its own micro climate, or even a plastic bag tied around the pot, a fancy electrically heated propagator or a pot with one of these plastic domes fitted over

the top. Or even perhaps a heated bed in the green house. What they all general need to propagate is a bottom heat of about 45d F. Myself after trying all of the above, have settled for rooting my cuttings on the staging in the greenhouse were they will continue to grow on, with no bottom heat or covering save that they are adjacent to the greenhouse heater during the winter months. By growing the cuttings in the environment they will continue to live in, they are not subject to any setbacks cause by cultural shocks. If you do cover your cuttings in any way, when the cuttings have rooted, always remove the covering in stages over two or three days. When I was using coffee jars I would unscrew the lid and rest the jar on two pencils and leave it for two to three days. You can tell when the cuttings are rooted. The centre of the cutting will go a lighter shade than the surrounding leaves.

**A New – Old Fuchsia! An email sent to Arthur from Theo Margelony** who lives & grows Fuchsias in New York!!.

I have some good news to pass along and unfortunately some bad news along with it. The good news is that there's a new fuchsia species from New Zealand. Err.. Well... Actually it's also an old species, too. A VERY old one. That's the bad news part. It's also an extinct old new species.

*Fuchsia antiqua* was last seen sometime in the earliest Miocene Epoch. That's about twenty-three million years ago. It was recently found in Early Miocene limestone taken from a mining pit in southern New Zealand. It's an exceptional discovery, though. Onagraceae family fossils are rare in general. Not just *Fuchsia* fossils. Besides a few pollen grains from unknown fuchsias, this is the earliest--and only--actual *Fuchsia* to ever show up in the fossil record. At the same time, there was also a separate fossilized anther clump from the new *Fuchsia* discovered in another piece of limestone. So two amazing rarities, for the price of one.

Below is a link to the abstract of the article that was published in the October 2013 issue of the *Journal of Botany*. For a number of reasons, the fossil flower & anther were determined to be from a distinct new *Skinnera* section species by the authors. The name *Fuchsia antiqua*, meaning Old or Ancient Fuchsia, is in reference to it's being the oldest *Fuchsia* ever discovered.

<http://www.amjbot.org/content/100/10/2052.abstract>

*Well I never!!*

### **John's Jottings** **Start of another year**

So far down here in Portishead it has been incredibly mild and like the pop band of the same name; wet, wet, wet! Fortunately the water runs straight past us into the Severn Estuary and even the high spring tides combined with the low pressure and wind did not cause to many problems here, with only some splashing of water and seaweed onto the road along the seafront. Others in the south west have not been so lucky with the misery of flooding and as I write this some of the villages on the levels are still cut off. I still have fuchsias planted in the garden in flower on the 15<sup>th</sup> January. We have so far only had about 4 ground frosts and the air temperature has only gone slightly below freezing on one night for a short period. I always feel at least if you can get to the end of January without any bitterly cold weather then the worst is over. Of course February and March can be very cold, but at least the day length is getting longer. Already we can see the influence of the longer days on the fuchsias in the greenhouse with many off them starting to make new growth. Those of you who have read my pieces before will know my greenhouse suffers from a lack of direct sun at this time of the year. I have constructed a high shelf made with a wood batten ladder frame covered in fine mesh weldmesh. This hangs just below the apex of the roof which is the warmest part of the greenhouse and catches the most sunlight. The weldmesh allows a good circulation of air and allows some light through. Onto this I have placed a lot of my potted up autumn cuttings in 6cm (2½") pots and last year's 9cm pots which have been cut back and potted down into 6cm (2½") or 8cm (3") pots. I also have a few smaller triphyllas up there as well. My hope is they will get kicked into strong growth a bit more quickly than the plants down on the floor and the staging. I have been better with the number of plants I have kept this year. I actually have some unoccupied staging and only a few plants down underneath the staging.

Ventilation is very important at this time of the year. I have two roof vents that can be opened via a threaded bar to any desired opening. The other 4 roof vents are on automatic openers, which don't start to open until the temperature inside the greenhouse exceeds 15°C. I use small 2x1 batten blocks to keep these open on suitable days, either 1" or 2" opening depending on which way you put the block in. This combined with keeping the double doors open creates a bit more ventilation in the day.

This is the time of year, if you haven't already done it to look through the fuchsia nursery catalogues and order varieties you want either as cuttings that can be sent via the mail or carrier, or larger plants for collection later in the year. When you go to your selected nursery to collect your 3 BFS cuttings have look around and support them buy buying something else. Many of them have been through a very tough time in the last couple of years and deserve your support.

I have written an article for the Spring Bulletin prompted by John Porter's comments in his updated history of the BFS. It looks at varieties that were featured as new introductions in UK between 1994 and 2003. Of the 223 cultivars listed, 115 are no longer available in the UK (as far as I can find) but 13 of them are still available from European fuchsia nurseries. 71 are still definitely available and 31 are possibly available in the UK. For many of these, there is only one specialist nursery which still lists the cultivar. While this can be expected to some extent, as some of the new introductions are not different enough, or exhibit some growth habits which growers don't like, to lose 50% in a 10 to 20 year period is quite dramatic. A lot can be attributed to the closure of several specialist nurseries over the last years and there are some this year who have dramatically reduced the number of varieties they keep.

Best wishes to you all for growing in 2014 and I hope to see some of you at the various BFS events which will take place this year.

### **Urgent Action needed at the EU**

The EU is in the process of merging together twelve existing directives on seeds, vegetative, ornamental and forestry propagative material into one giant piece of legislation imaginatively titled "PROPOSED EU REGULATION ON THE PRODUCTION AND MAKING AVAILABLE ON THE MARKET OF PLANT REPRODUCTIVE MATERIAL (PRM). Although if you read the public summaries it all sounds rather benign, buried in the legislation is a requirement that all plants commercially sold for trade will require an extensive registration via an Officially Recognised Description (ORD). The Horticultural Trades Association estimate this could cost around £500 per variety and further estimate the cost to register the current ornamentals listed in the RHS plantfinder around 37 million pounds.

Several UK bodies among them the Royal Horticultural Society, the Horticultural Trades Association and Plant Heritage are concerned that the potential devastating effects on small nurseries, national plant collection holders and other similar organisations have not been fully considered. They are urging people to contact their MEPs to have the legislation amended.

Considering our own small segment of the ornamental market, namely the fuchsia, this could further severely reduce the number of specialist fuchsia nurseries, reduce the choice of cultivars we already have and severely limit the introduction of new cultivars from the hybridisers.

This was discussed at our standing committee in November who authorised our secretary Paul Munro to write a letter to the MEPs who sit on the agriculture committee on behalf of the British Fuchsia Society, urging them to make changes to the proposed legislation.

For any of you who wish to read further on the subject then I suggest the following internet links.

<http://www.thegardeningtimes.com/article.asp?AR01=1179>

<http://www.rhs.org.uk/News/European-Commission-plant-legislation>

<http://www.nccpg.com/News/Plant-Heritage-Urges-Urgent-Action-over-European-C.aspx>

<http://www.the-hta.org.uk/file.php?fileid=2357>

<http://www.plantsforeurope.com/2013/11/new-european-commission-regulation-on-plant-reproductive-material/>

And for those of you who cannot sleep at night, here is a link to the entire draft legislation:

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2013:0262:FIN:EN:PDF>

*I agree with John – we do need to be aware of this possible legislation.*

## Spreading the Word – Ric Reilly

With the Camborne-Redruth Fuchsia Society (CRFS), now in its silver anniversary year, my colleagues on the Committee and I are pleased that last year we grasped the mettle and stood up a new website ([www.cornwallfuchsias.btck.co.uk](http://www.cornwallfuchsias.btck.co.uk)). This was after talking and agonizing about it, not for months but for years. Yet as I reported in Fuchsia News, soon after, it was dead easy getting started using BT's Community Web Kit ([www.btck.co.uk](http://www.btck.co.uk)).

We started in May last year with just a few pages which came courtesy of BT through which we were able to give visitors to our website some basic details of CRFS such as where we meet, when we meet and our programme going forward. But quickly and easily we were able to add more and more content about other events happening in the area, as well as news, a bit of a blog (Ric's Bits) to give it a personal feel, and reports with lots of pictures of our meetings.

Even in the first full month, June, we had over 400 hits on the site with more than 1,200 page views. One popular attraction were the galleries of pictures from the previous year's show, and even now, even with last year's pictures loaded, the 2012 pages still get a lot of views each month. Last month, December, it was 600 visitors and 2,600 page views, which in simple terms is twenty people each day looking at who we are and what we're up to. And if just a few of those people who are not Members of CRFS take an interest in the Society or come along to our show in August, then our efforts will have paid off in a spectacular way.

We are finding that the key to making the most of a website, once you have one, is keeping it fresh, up to date and interesting, towards which I would suggest:

- ✓ Share the load and ensure that more than one person has editorial access (you will find many society sites frozen, because the only person with access has left or lost interest).
- ✓ Add content regularly, a bit of news, a report on a meeting, or just something interesting or quirky. You must give visitors to your site reasons to keep coming back.
- ✓ We often say a picture is worth a thousand words, and this is definitely the case for fuchsia websites. Quite simply you can not have too many pictures on a website, and you can and should mix it up with people and events and not just plants. The BT platform allows at least 500 pictures and I'm hoping if one is sensible and limits the size of pictures then it could be many times that.
- ✓ Encourage members to contribute perhaps a regular blog (<http://cornwallfuchsias.btck.co.uk/RicsBits>) or a collection of Members' contributions (<http://cornwallfuchsias.btck.co.uk/TheBrightSide>). This is a great way to inject some fun and informality, as well as participation.
- ✓ Introduce some mutual back scratching with other fuchsia societies (<http://www.bdfs.btck.co.uk>) or perhaps other local societies (<http://www.westcornwallorchidsociety.btck.co.uk>). Incidentally both websites use the BT kit, and the Birmingham Society (BDFS) was built in just a few weeks and is quite amazing.
- ✓ Make it easy for regular visitors to find new and changed content. On the CRFS site we list out on the homepage the pages that have been updated in recent weeks, and make it easy for people to go straight to those pages.

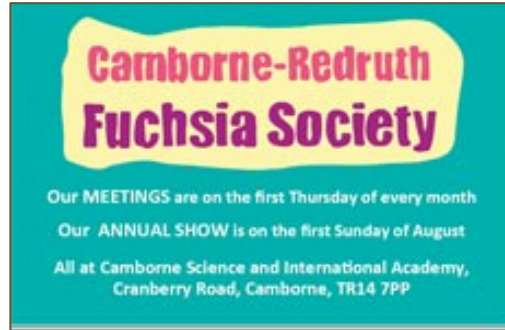
If you do take up the challenge of a website, remember you are not alone. When Barry Knott compiled the new Birmingham site (<http://www.bdfs.btck.co.uk>) he and I had a number of discussions, shared ideas, and learned some tricks from each other. Please do not hesitate to email me if I can help at all ([ric@penvalehouse.org.uk](mailto:ric@penvalehouse.org.uk)), and if you are coming the BFS AGM in Reading, come and talk to me as I will be around all weekend as well as Friday and Saturday evenings. At a push we might even be able to get you started there and then with a website for your society.

The website is not the only initiative we have started in CRFS to boost our communications with Members, new and old, and with the public. Websites are a passive form of communication; they rely on you going and looking. As an alternative, you'll all have experience of email "spam" from Amazon and other sellers to prompt and entice you to visit their websites and view their wares. So for CRFS we now produce a regular email newsletter that goes to an ever-growing list of addressees (not just members but other Fuchsia friends around the world) to keep them up to date and to prompt them to view the website.

During the winter, the email newsletter has been going out monthly a couple of days before our monthly meetings, and in the summer leading up to a number of shows we were sending it out weekly. This has been amazingly effective and no-one has complained of it being intrusive, and the bonus is that some people regularly forward it onto their friends so

I haven't a clue how many people it reaches, but I would guess 200+. If you want to receive a sample to see what we write and the format, then again drop me an email ([ric@penvalehouse.org.uk](mailto:ric@penvalehouse.org.uk)).

Our final initiative to boost communication has been a contact card, the informal equivalent of a business card. We do flyers and handouts for our shows but being flimsy and either A5 or A4, we found that these hit the bin when people got home. Our thought was a business card, being smaller, could be slipped into a purse or a wallet, and our additional thought was to make it light-hearted and memorable to encourage people to hold onto it. What we ended up with was this two-sided card which is working in spreading the word:



*Thanks Ric – I know quite a few Societies have followed your lead and started a website! Why not give us an update on your website?*

#### **New for 2014 - Jim Muil**

Some new introductions for 2014 are listed for the benefit of our members who enjoy the annual novelties that our hybridisers produce. My thanks to them and the nurseries who have provided the following information. Please note that not all nurseries do a postal service so check before ordering. Good growing.

- ALFONSO (Waving 2014). (Single/Semi Double/Double) Tube & Sepals: pale pink. Corolla: creamy white. Strong grower and show winner. (Little Brook Fuchsias & Percival's Fuchsias).
- ANN ALLEN (Fleming 2014). (Single) Tube & Sepals: white. Corolla: pale lilac blue. Small single with lots of flowers. (Little Brook Fuchsias).
- BARBARA ELIZABETH (Mal. Wilkinson 2014). (Single). White and Rose Purple. (Percival's Fuchsias).
- BEN-BEN (Ray Birt 2014). (Single) Tube & Sepals red. Corolla violet. (Roualeyn Nursery).
- CHARLES JENKINSON (Gordon Reynolds 2014) Double flowers. (Percival's Fuchsias & Roualeyn Nursery).
- DAGWOOD (Arnold Nicholls 2014) White/Dark Blue. Show-bench potential.(Percival's Fuchsias).
- JUST LUCY (Bill Wye 2014). (Single) A smaller Lyndon [pink & Lilac]. (Percival's Fuchsias).
- LINNETT DRIVE (Bill Wye) (Double) Sport from Empress of Prussia. (Percival's Fuchsias).
- MARLES DE MEEK (Michael Percival 2014). Encliandra. Vigorous and spreading. (Percival's Fuchsias).
- MRS WILKS (Wilkins 2014) (Single) Tube & Sepals: palest pink. Corolla: white. Ideal for hanging baskets.
- ROGER PORTER (Gordon Reynolds 2014). Double. White. Small and Bushy. (Percival's Fuchsias).
- ROYAL DIAMOND JUBILEE (Gordon Goodwin 2013) Double. Deep blue/white. Lax bush. (Percival's Fuchsias).
- SYREME (Ray Birt 2014) (Semi double/Double). Tube & Sepals: rose. Corolla: shades of lavender, (Little Brook Fuchsias & Percival's Fuchsias & Roualeyn Nursery).
- TOBY S (Ray Birt 2014) (Semi double/Double) Tube & Sepals: rose. Corolla: palest mallow. Short jointed floriferous fuchsia. (Little Brook Fuchsias & Roualeyn Nursery & Percival's Fuchsias).
- WHALEY THORNS (Arnold Nicholls 2014) (Double). Red/Purple. Full double blooms. Bred from Lillian Annetts. Show variety.(Percival's Fuchsias)

#### **A Handful of 'B's – From Felixstowe FS newsletter**

**Beginners** – Contrary to popular belief a beginner is not someone who knows nothing but someone who is willing to learn more about a subject. New members joining a group often bring in new ideas for older members to think about.

### **Boldness** – Don't be afraid of your plants

- If they need watering, water them well and then leave until they need watering again – don't dribble water in
- In winter if it is not frosty open the windows and doors of your greenhouse
- During spring and summer get your plants out in the rain. They will feel better for it.
- When plants need pinching out to make them bushy do so without hesitation and pinch them all over and not just here and there

**Bad Days** – We all get them! It's either too hot, too cold, too much rain, not enough rain. Maybe there is a foot of snow and we slip just as we reach the greenhouse and break a pane of glass. Don't despair but learn from the bad days Make notes so that you don't make the same mistakes again and ENJOY your hobby and remember the good times

**Being Observant** – Success comes from spending time with your plants. Learn to spot trouble early

- Very dark leaves often indicate a plant needs water
- Yellowing on young leaves often indicates a magnesium deficiency which a dose of Epsom Salts will often rectify.
- Limp leaves will often indicate that a plant has been overwatered
- Distorted leaves need to be checked – in the spring it could be aphids, later in the year it could be Gall Mite.

### **Buying the Best**

- When buying rooted cuttings buy only the strong healthy little plants
- When buying a greenhouse buy one that will give plenty of ventilation – a door at both ends is a good idea.
- When buying marker pens make sure that the ink is permanent and will not fade in moisture or sunshine
- When buying a thermometer get one that gives you the maximum and minimum temperatures. It is important to know the lowest temperature the greenhouse goes to as well as the highest

### **Finally a few definitions from Derek Luther**

Adult – A person who has stopped growing at both ends and is now growing in the middle

Chickens - - The only animals that you eat before they are born and after they are dead

Committee – A body that keeps minutes and wastes hours

Dust – Mud with the water squeezed out

Egotist – Someone who is normally me deep in conversation

Handkerchief – cold storage

Secret – something that you tell one person at a time

Tomorrow – one of greatest labour saving devices of today

Yawn – an honest opinion openly expressed

Well that is it for now!

Please don't forget to let me know your show details so that I can include them in the Spring Edition of Fuchsia News. Also please let us know if there is something that you would like one of us, or someone that we know, to write about – we will do our best to include it in either the Spring or Summer editions!

Good Growing and Best Wishes

Carol, Arthur and John

