



Pinching Your Fuchsias

by Verna Berger

The practice of PINCHING or STOPPING is very important if you desire your fuchsias to be full and laden with blossoms. I think we have all heard of the term tough love, and this is the type of approach necessary when it comes to pinching. One has to be ruthless in removing the new growth tips every couple nodes. Failure to do this will result in a lanky plant with sparse blossoms.

When starting the pinching process, begin counting up the stem from soil level. After the second set of leaves, you will notice the formation of a new set. Pinch, or snip out, using a tiny pair of scissors, such as manicure scissors with very sharp points. Your thumb and index finger also will suffice, just be careful not to damage other leaves. Perhaps that's where the old cliché, "Green Thumb" came from. After pinching a few hundred little tips, your thumb will indeed be green. This "pinching process" should be done uniformly on all sides to ensure a nicely shaped plant. There are some varieties that are very difficult to control and shape as you would like, since they have a mind of their own. Mood Indigo is one that comes to mind as not being the easiest to train and shape; at least the one I owned was very strong willed.

Each place where you pinched or snipped out the new growth, two new sets of leaves will appear in a short time, forming two new shoots. When these new shoots have produced two set of leaves, again pinch or snip out the tip. You may continue



this process several more times. You be the judge. If you are not grooming your plants for show, pinching three times should give you the desired results.

It all depends on how full you would like your plant. Keep in mind; it will take 6 to 8 weeks after the last pinching for a single to produce blossoms, and 10 to 12 weeks for doubles.

If you would like a tighter or fuller crown, yet are ready to have the outer stems gain some length and begin draping down over your basket, stop pinching those outside stems, but continue pinching those inside closer to the crown. This will give you a nice rounded crown, while enjoying some earlier blossoms on the now longer outside branches.