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FUCHSIA

Katie Reynolds

Wouldn't it be pleasant to give these lovely plants their correct name, in pronunciation as well as in spelling? The name honours a noted German botanist Leonard Fuchs, 1502-1566. I have no doubt that he pronounced his name Fooks. Indeed the name has been Anglicised by some Fuchs, to Fookes and Ffoulkes and ffoulkes. Therefore these plants should be Fooksia not Fewsha. This was brought home to me in two ways recently. A friend who passes a small nursery on his way home from town noticed that they had Fushias for sale. He corrected this spelling but found next morning that they had gone back to their original Fushias. After three attempts he gave up! The nursery folk probably thought that they had been victims of a prankster, or had been hit by some odd sort of vandalism.

Recently I wrote a submission in which I had twice printed, for clear positive spelling, Fuchsia procumbens. I had my submission typed and photostat copies made of it. Only after several had been sent out did I notice that the typist, a skilled professional young lady, had typed Fuschia. Thus she had all the letters but had placed them incorrectly. Obviously she knows Fewshas and it was natural for her to type the name as it sounded to her.

I like using Maori as well as botanical names, and for Fuchsia procumbens have two that are delightfully descriptive. They are
rere ua — raindrops, and
to-te-ra — sunset.

If enough of us who like to mess around with plants would care to pronounce Fuchsia Fooksia then correctly Fuchsia it would become. Mistakes would be avoided and we would be commemorating Leonard Fuchs and his Fuchsia. Let's do it!

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