

Impatiens Alert

In the past two years we have seen a rapid increase of the disease called Impatiens Downy Mildew. This devastating water mold (related to late blight of potatoes and tomatoes) has become widespread through much of the country.

When it shows up, this disease can cause a beautiful flowering mound of impatiens to be a bare stand of stems in a very short time. This is an airborne disease and even if the plants are completely healthy when purchased and planted, wind blown spores can move in and eventually ruin the planting. Evidence of this was seen in some locations in New York State during the latter part of the 2011 and 2012 growing seasons.

Plasmopara obducens is the name of the water mold responsible for this disease. It can spread quickly in wet weather. It also can survive overwinter in the soil through spores in infected plant debris. Once plants are infected, it is not practical to treat them, since there is no cure for this disease.

Downy Mildew likes cool and wet conditions and will spread via infected plants, water, and wind. Early symptoms can be very subtle and may be a slight stippling or chlorosis of the leaves and the leaves may curl downward. White colored spores may be seen on the underside of the leaves.



(Healthy on left, Downy Mildew on three leaves on right)

In advanced stages plants will appear stunted, can drop their leaves and flowers, and eventually collapse.

For best results:

- Clean up plant debris from last season, including stems, leaves, and roots that may have still be in the bed.
- Start with disease free plants. Most growers are able to keep plants clean in the controlled greenhouse environment.
- Wait for warm dry weather to plant. Impatiens do not grow well in cool wet conditions, and will easily catch up if planted when it warms up.
- Avoid overhead watering. It is better to water at the root zone or soil level. Never water late in the day to minimize causing the area to be wet during the night.
- Remove infected plants and debris immediately, place in a bag and dispose of with trash. Never compost infected plants.



(Healthy)



(After Downy Mildew)

All varieties of garden impatiens are susceptible to Downy Mildew, but other bedding plants as well as New Guinea and Sun impatiens are not. The following are a few plants that gardeners may consider as a substitute for impatiens:

- Begonia – both wax and angel wing varieties
- Coleus
- Lobelia
- New Guinea Impatiens
- Sunpatiens
- Torenia
- Salvia
- Sweet Potato Vine

We need your input in 2013. If you plant impatiens, please report your results to us by filling out the following brief survey.

Did you notice signs of this disease in 2012? Yes ___ No ___

What month did your plants become visibly stressed? June ___ July ___ Aug ___ Sept ___ Oct ___

Did you use the same beds in 2013? Yes ___ No ___

Did plants look healthy when purchased? Yes ___ No ___

Did you notice any signs of Downy Mildew in 2013? Yes ___ No ___

What month did it first appear? June ___ July ___ Aug ___ Sept ___ Oct ___

Would you purchase Impatiens again in 2014? Yes ___ No ___

What plant would you consider as a substitute? _____

Please drop off your results, mail to Chester's, 1117 York St., Utica NY 13502 or just give us a call at the end of the 2013 growing season. Thanks!

We need your input!! Please report your 2013 impatiens results. Thank you!