

Currituck Garden News



May 2013

Impatiens Downy Mildew

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The Garden News is published to provide you with educational information, upcoming programs and opportunities on gardening issues. Feel free to share with others.

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Impatiens downy mildew is a destructive foliar disease of *Impatiens walleriana* that is capable of causing complete defoliation or plant collapse, especially in landscape plantings under moist conditions and cool nights. Primary symptoms include yellowing or stippling of leaves, leaves curling downward at the margins, white downy-like growth on the underside of leaves, stunting, leaf and flower drop. Downy mildew of impatiens is caused by a fungus-like organism. Many of the traditional fungicides used to control fungal diseases of plants will not work on the downy mildews. All types of propagated *Impatiens walleriana* are susceptible to downy mildew; however, all New Guinea impatiens (*I. hawkeri*) and hybrids such as SunPatiens® are immune to impatiens downy mildew. No other bedding plants are known hosts of this particular downy mildew, although there are a few other downy mildew species that specifically attack other floriculture plants like coleus and basil. If and when downy mildew shows up in the landscape and the level of severity will depend on local weather conditions and how the 'winds blow'. Fungicide treatments are not recommended for plants in the landscape; instead, all infected impatiens should be pulled from the landscape and destroyed. Fungicides are not always 100% effective at eliminating the disease. Allowing infected plants to remain in the landscape may allow the pathogen to overwinter which can start a new epidemic later in the year or in following years if impatiens are replanted in the area. New Guinea impatiens, coleus, begonia, or other available bedding plants are safe to reset in the affected area.

Defoliation and plant collapse caused by downy mildew

Downy mildew on impatiens



Vegetable Garden Planting Guide

Continue to plant snap and pole beans, cantaloupe, watermelon, cucumbers, pumpkins, squash, tomatoes and corn during the month of May. It is now warm enough to also plant lima beans, eggplant, okra, southern peas, peppers and sweet potatoes.

To find specific planting dates for these crops see

http://go.ncsu.edu/spring_vege_guide

Lawn Care

For Bermuda, Zoysia and St. Augustine lawns, apply nitrogen several weeks after the lawn fully turns green. If centipede grass appears yellow do not fertilize, apply iron sulfate or chelated iron instead. Apply post-emergence herbicides in May as needed to control summer broadleaf weeds like clover, knotweed or spurge. If thatch is thicker than 1/2 inch, power rake in late May. Replant bare areas using seed, plugs or springs when the daytime temperatures are consistently above 60 degrees. In fescue lawns, check and control white grubs in May.

For more information about lawn care see <http://www.lawncares.ncsu.edu/>

Pruning Calendar

After the flowers have faded and dropped, May is a good time to prune azalea, barberry, camellia, daphne, forsythia, Indian hawthorn, winter jasmine, pieris, photinia, quince, serviceberry, spring blooming spirea, viburnum, weigela, pussy willow, witchhazel, buckeye, redbud, and crabapple. You can also prune pittosporum, privet, yew, euonymus, bayberry and boxwood. For a more comprehensive list of plants and the best time to prune them, see

<http://pubs.ext.vt.edu/430/430-462/430-462.html>



Pest Patrol: Aphids

In the early spring and summer, heavy infestations of aphids can be found feeding on new growth. Aphids feed on ornamental trees, shrubs and flowers by inserting mouthparts into the plant and sucking out sap that is rich in sugars. Aphids are slow, fragile, insects that vary from 1/16 to 1/4 inch long. They can be black, brown, yellow, red, gray or green. Most of the aphids are without a waxy covering, although the bodies of some of the woolly aphids are covered with white, waxy threads. Aphids can be managed with horticultural soaps and oils or with a number of different insecticides. One of the most common is imidacloprid but research shows that systemic neonicotinoids like imidacloprid can be harmful to pollinators that ingest pollen and nectar. So consider other options before drenching plants with these insecticides. All season horticultural oils work well and are much less harmful. More information on aphids can be found at

<http://go.ncsu.edu/aphid>



Aphids

Cover Crops

Cover crops are seeded directly into empty garden areas, allowed to grow for several weeks until they reach bloom stage, and are then tilled into the soil. Cover crops are planted to make the soil better for other plants. They can be used to build organic matter, add nitrogen to the soil, suppress weed growth, and prevent erosion. Members of the pea and clover family are known as legumes. These plants are able to capture nitrogen from the air and make it available to plants, providing a natural source of fertilizer. Grains and grasses are the best choice for weed suppression. Schedule a cover crop whenever a field or bed is expected to come out of production for more than 30 days during the growing season, or for the remainder of the fall and winter. While the cover crop is growing, it will suppress the germination and growth of weeds through competition and shading. When killed and left on the surface as a mulch, cover crops continue to suppress weeds, primarily by blocking out light. Cover crops can also suppress weeds chemically (allelopathy). Some cover crops release chemicals, either while they are growing or while they are decomposing, which prevent the germination or growth of weed seeds. Cover crops can also be a form of intercropping. Intercropping alternates widely spaced rows of vegetables like tomatoes or winter squash with swaths of cover crop such as buckwheat. The buckwheat is allowed to grow and suppress weeds for several weeks, then cut before it begins to compete with the vegetables, and left on the soil surface as a mulch that retards later-emerging weeds. Living mulch can be used in alleys between plastic-mulched beds or rows of vegetable crops. Two of the best summer cover crops for gardens are buckwheat and southern peas. Both of these can be seeded from mid-April through September. Allow the crops to grow until you start seeing flowers, at which point you can till them directly into the soil or mow them first and then turn them under. For buckwheat, this should take 35 to 40 days, but not more than 10 days after it starts to flower. For southern peas, this will take two months or more.

Winter cover crops include rye, oats, barley and clover. These can be planted at the end of summer or in early fall, giving them time to put on about 4–6 inches of growth before winter freezes render them dormant. Crimson Clover can be planted in September. Most of the nitrogen fixation occurs in late April and May. Clover and rye can be planted together for added benefit. Grains and grasses should be planted from October through mid November. Incorporate these crops into the soil about 3 to 6 weeks before planting a garden in the spring. Do not plant vegetable seeds into soil in which the cover crop has been freshly incorporated.

To learn more about cover crops see http://go.ncsu.edu/winter_cover_crops or http://go.ncsu.edu/summer_cover_crops

Crimson Clover and Winter Wheat planted together as a cover crop.



Winter wheat used as a cover crop between rows of cut flowers mulched with plastic.



Coastal North Carolina Daylily Society

The Coastal North Carolina Daylily Society will meet on
May 14, 2013 at 10:00 am
at the Currituck County Extension Center.

Plants, Pests and Pathogens

A two hour interactive webinar on Horticulture, Entomology and Plant Pathology will be offered on June 25, 2013 from 10:00 am to 12:00 pm at the Currituck County Extension Center. The webinar is FREE and will cover a wide variety of topics related to plants, insects and plant diseases. Dr. Mark Windham, a plant pathologist from University of Tennessee, will speak about roses. Sign up here <http://go.ncsu.edu/ppjune2013>
For more information about this webinar see http://go.ncsu.edu/plants_pests_pathogens

For additional information on any of the contents of this newsletter call or e-mail Debbie Kelso at 232-2262, deborah_kelso@ncsu.edu

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Deborah E. Kelso
Agricultural Technician

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Currituck County Center
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