

IMPATIENS DOWNY MILDEW

Impatiens downy mildew is a fungal disease related to the pathogen that causes potato and tomato blight. The disease is spread by spores produced on the underside of infected leaves. Spores are splashed by rain and can be carried for long distances in the wind. An outbreak of downy mildew can happen when extended periods of wet/damp weather allows for spore production.

If you are affected by the fungus, you may see the following symptoms:

- On leaves: Affected leaves initially appear stippled, then turn yellow and are rapidly shed from the plant. Sometimes a white fungal growth can be observed on the lower leaf surface. Subtle gray markings on the upper leaf surface may also be observed. Infected leaves decay quickly resulting in bare, leafless stems. The stems become soft and the plant collapses in a manner very similar to frost damage.



- On flowers: Flowers may also drop fast. The plant is often reduced to bare branches with a small tuft of yellow leaves and flower buds at the tip.

Control/Disposal

Infected plants should be disposed of immediately. Do not compost them in your backyard composter, and do not place in your Waste Watch compost cart. It is uncertain if the temperatures achieved at the Central Compost Facility are sufficient to destroy the spores.

Place affected plants in a clear plastic bag, tie it closed, and place in the waste cart. If there is insufficient space in your black cart, you may place up to two additional clear plastic bags (or reusable containers like an old aluminum garbage can with the bags inside them) beside the black cart during regular bi-weekly collection.

The spores from downy mildew can survive for several years. It is recommended that you not plant Impatiens in an area affected by this disease for at least a year. This particular mildew is specific to Impatiens and will not infect other garden plants.

Consult with your local nursery for additional information.