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What's up with Impatiens?

Impatiens are being wiped out by a fungal disease called downy mildew. Impatiens Downy Mildew only affects varieties of *Impatiens walleriana*. This includes varieties of traditional impatiens, double impatiens, trailing impatiens and miniature impatiens.

Impatiens Downy Mildew has become prevalent in the Twin Cities/Metro Area over the last four years. This fungal disease is present in the environment and spreads easily through movement in wind and water. Fungal spores will remain in the soil for a number of seasons after the initial infection. If you have had the disease in your garden, you will likely have it again.

Symptoms of the disease include yellowing of leaves accompanied by a downward cupping, giving the appearance that plants need to be watered. A fine white coating may be visible on the underside of the leaves. Over time, the flowers and leaves drop, leaving bare stems with a few small leaves left on top. Finally, the stems completely collapse and the plants die.

Once the plant is infected, it will not recover. Infected plants should be totally removed from the area (including all leaf debris and roots), bagged and disposed of immediately. Do not compost diseased plant material.

If you choose to buy and plant impatiens, there are some cultural practices that can help reduce the likelihood of infection and disease:

- Space plants appropriately so that leaf surfaces will dry out quickly
- Water more deeply and less often
- Avoid watering in the evening
- Avoid overhead irrigation
- Plant impatiens later in the spring when extended periods of rain are less likely

Tonkadale will not grow or sell *Impatiens walleriana* in 2015.

While nothing can replace an old garden standard that provides outstanding color and shade tolerance, there are many beautiful substitutions. 2015 is a year to try something new and make new friends!

Shade Coleus Torenia Hypoestes Shade Lobelia Browallia

New Guinea Impatiens (*Impatiens hawkeri*) Sunpatiens Divine New Guinea Impatiens

Wax Begonias Big Begonias Dragon Wing Begonias

Shade Foliage Perennial Ground Covers for Shade A Perennial Shade Garden

Additional information is available on the University of Minnesota Extension website: www.extension.umn.edu

Plant the Planet!