



## Downy Mildew Disease in Impatiens

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**Here we go again.** Another bug or disease affecting the plants in our landscape. First it was palm diseases. In the last few years it has been our ficus affected by Ficus Whitefly infestations. More recently, a Spirial Whitefly attacking many types of plants and trees. Now, South Florida is in for some more subtle changes this winter, as the effects of Downy Mildew Disease evidences itself in our landscape. Beginning in November, no longer do we have the option of using the most common winter annual (Impatiens walleriana).

**What happened?** Last year, during our winter annual season, many communities who have traditionally used Impatiens walleriana, found their plants collapsing and dying in masse. The cause was Downy Mildew Disease that wiped out most impatiens in the landscape and in the nurseries.

**What's being done about it?** In one word – RESEARCH. But at this time, there is no remedy available to prevent the disease. Consider any fungicides as mainly protective. Discard any infected plants and associated debris as quickly as

possible into plastic bags and place in the trash. Do not attempt to compost this material as the infectious spores will live a long time in the soil and infect any future crop planted in it.

### So, what do we use to replace our Impatiens?

Working with the premise that there will be two plantings per year, our recommended options are: New Guinea Impatiens, Bronze Leaf Begonias, and Sunpatiens. To date, these varieties have not been susceptible to Downy Mildew. The downside, in comparison, is that none of these options offer the same amount of flowers per square inch of plant surface. There are other options to those who are willing to use other choices with a shorter bed life. Annuals such as Marigolds, Salvia, Pentas, Dianthus, Celosia, Petunias, Pansy, Snapdragons, Verbena and Alyssum are some other options.

Good Luck! Good Planting!

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