

Identification and Management of Downy Mildew of Impatiens

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Impatiens plantings have been relied on to provide a vibrant splash of color in landscape beds that are shady and not always suitable for a wide range of plant material. The downy mildew that infects impatiens is caused by a fungal-like microscopic organism that can infect standard bedding impatiens, double impatiens that are often used in hanging baskets, and balsam. This downy mildew cannot spread to any other plant besides *Impatiens walleriana*. New Guinea impatiens are resistant to downy mildew.

Recognizing Downy Mildew on Impatiens

- Yellow or pale green foliage.
- Downward curling of leaves.
- White to light-gray fuzz on the undersides of leaves.
- Emerging leaves are small or discolored.
- Flower buds fail to form.
- Stunting.
- Advanced infections defoliate plants.

Moist, wet conditions and cool night temperatures favor the development of this disease. Impatiens downy mildew has a type of spore (sporangium) that can move long distances via wind, and can also be splashed by water to nearby plants (see Fig. 1C,D). Healthy plants can become infected after planting into the landscape from airborne spores. Another type of spore (oospore) has been found in landscapes of Florida and the northeast which allows downy mildew to overwinter and infect impatiens the following season; oospores have not been researched.

Management Strategies

- Carefully inspect all impatiens, looking under the leaves.
- Scout often for the disease.
- Immediately remove infected plants, seal in plastic bags and place in the trash. Do not compost diseased plants.

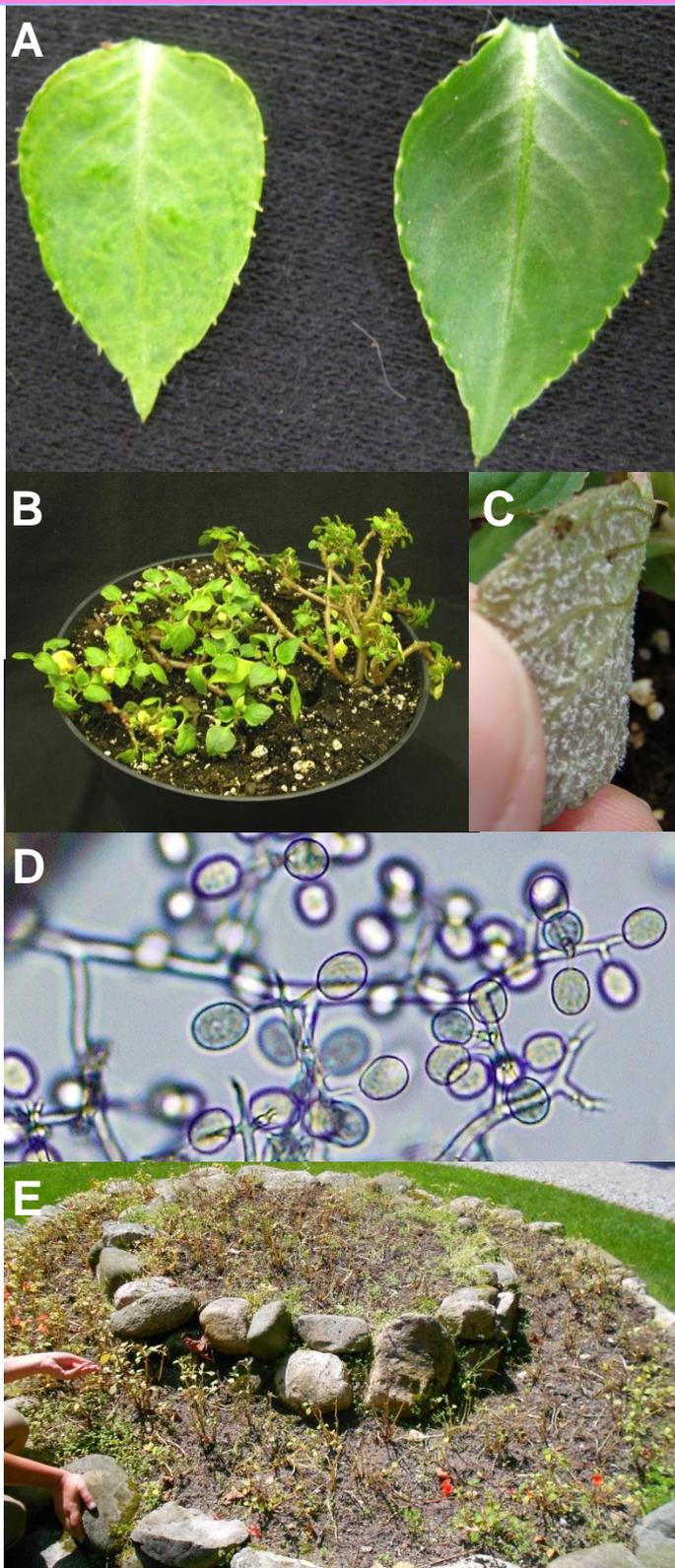


Fig. 1A, Infected (left) versus healthy (right) leaf. B, plant stunting. C, Sporangia on underside of leaf, and D, closeup of sporangia. E, diseased impatiens in a landscape bed.