

Diseases of Specific Florist Crops

Keeping florist crops free of disease requires constant care and planning. Prevention is the basis of freedom from disease and should be an integral part of the general cultural program. The symptoms of the diseases of major florist crops are described individually by crop in a series of fact sheets.

Begonia

- Damping-off: Collapse of young plants may be caused by *Pythium*, *Rhizoctonia*, or *Botrytis*.
- Botrytis leaf spot: Large, irregularly outlined brown leaf spots, particularly common on large plants given insufficient spacing; stems may also be invaded, leading to wilt of the cankered portion.
- Powdery mildew: Fuzzy white patches on leaves or flowers. In some cases, leaf tissue shows dark, greasy-looking spots beneath a sparse colony of powdery mildew. Begonias are highly susceptible.
- Bacterial leaf spot (*Xanthomonas campestris* pv. *begoniae*): Dark, greasy spots appear on leaves, or brown V-shaped dead areas develop at leaf margins. Spots are surrounded by a speckled or chlorotic zone of leaf tissue. With high temperatures, disease may progress until plants collapse. Certain Elatior begonias are particularly susceptible; Non-Stop begonias may show less extensive leaf spotting.
- Foliar nematodes (*Aphelenchoides fragariae*): Sunken gray-green blotches that turn reddish brown or black. Infected leaves may wilt, die, and hang limply from the plant. Elatior begonias are extremely susceptible to foliar nematodes.
- Impatiens necrotic spot virus (INSV): Round brown leaf spots, chlorotic mottling, brown streaking along veins, and brown patches in the leaf at the petiole end. Control of the vector, the western flower thrips, is essential.