Problem: Impatiens Downy Mildew (*Plasmopara obducens*)

Hosts: New Guinea impatiens are not affected by this disease but most others are including the standard bedding impatiens, double-flowered impatiens and mini-impatiens. Balsam impatiens are less susceptible and usually only exhibit a yellow leaf spot. This downy mildew is only active on impatiens and will not affect other garden plants.

Description: The first symptom of Impatiens Downy Mildew is leaf yellowing followed by what appears to be a wilting effect. Plants infected while young will be stunted. Humid conditions will allow a white coating to appear on the underside of some leaves which is caused by the spores of the fungus. This symptom is diagnostic for this disease.

Infection can be passed by water splashing from nearby infected plants or by spores that have overwintered in the soil. Infected plants will not recover. Fungicides will not reliably protect healthy plants that are near those that are diseased. Once present, this disease will remain indefinitely as the spores remain in the soil.

Recommendations: Prevention is key as an infected area should not be replanted to impatiens as the spores will remain indefinitely. Impatiens downy mildew is encouraged by wet leaf surfaces (several hours), shade and crowded plants. Avoid overhead watering especially at night where leaves are likely to remain wet for long periods. Infected plants should be removed immediately. If the disease is confirmed, substitute other bedding plants for impatiens.

References:
1. Impatiens Downy Mildew, Virginia Cooperative Extension, Virginia State University

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