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Powdery Mildew on Rosemary

Numerous cases of powdery mildew have been seen this season in the greenhouse. Keep an eye on your plants for the tell-tale white, powdery fungal growth of powdery mildew.

Complaints about powdery mildew on rosemary are frequently heard from home gardeners – in the northeast we hear most complaints after gardeners bring their outdoor potted rosemary plants indoors for the winter. Typically powdery mildew doesn't often trouble plants in production, but we've seen a few cases in greenhouses this year.

Luckily powdery mildew is easy to spot, so long as you are looking for it. It's easy when you are incredibly busy in spring to become lax about regularly scouting your plants, and problems like powdery mildew on rosemary might not be noticed until plants are getting picked for orders. Make every effort to stay

on top of scouting. At the very least try to take a few moments as you pass by to look at your plants closely (be sure to check both the new and old foliage) for the white fungal growth of powdery mildew.



Photo Courtesy of Margery Daughtrey

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Since rosemary is an herb, you won't have many of your typical fungicides that are available for use on ornamental plants. Read labels carefully. Some products that are effective for powdery mildew management on rosemary include *Bacillus subtilis* products, potassium bicarbonate products, and horticultural and botanical oils. Not all products will be approved for organic use. For effective management, these products will need to be applied regularly (every week) and with good coverage. Use caution when applying oils – if applied under poor drying conditions (overcast and humid), injury is likely to occur.

Cultural management strategies to help manage this disease are to keep humidity low in the greenhouse (less than 90%), maintain good plant spacing and air movement, don't keep older infected plants near young healthy transplants, and use good sanitation practices.

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