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Powdery Mildew on Poinsettias

Under the right conditions, powdery mildew can spread rapidly on poinsettia crops and even low levels of infections can make plants unsalable. Scout now for the powdery fungal growth on the upper and lower leaf surfaces.



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Recently we've heard of a few growers with powdery mildew on poinsettia - a good reminder to be on the alert. It is important to catch this disease early, since your treatment options will be limited closer to sale when you have to consider bract safety and residue. Also, you don't want uncontrolled powdery mildew resulting in 'snow' on your poinsettia bracts!

Once your average daily greenhouse temperatures are below 86F this disease will rapidly spread *if* it is present. Now that the weather is becoming cooler, you should be extra watchful.



*Early signs of powdery mildew on the undersides of a poinsettia leaf.
(photo courtesy of Margery Daughtrey, Cornell University)*

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Scout your crops carefully for any signs of powdery mildew. Keep in mind that this powdery mildew can be difficult to detect in early stages. Unlike most powdery mildew diseases, the very first signs are typically found on the undersides of the leaves. Look carefully for chlorotic spots on the leaf surface - these may not be obvious - then check the undersides for the white, powdery fungal growth. After the disease progresses

you will find the typical mildew on the leaf surface.

So long as this disease is detected early, it is easily managed with labeled fungicides. Scout your crops (now!) looking for signs of powdery mildew, and if seen treat with a rotation of labeled fungicides. Be sure to follow all label directions and warnings including those related to crop safety and resistance management.



*Early symptoms and signs of powdery mildew on a poinsettia leaf.
(photo courtesy of Margery Daughtrey, Cornell University)*

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