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Disease Control: Downy Mildew

Another common garden disease is downy mildew, but although it may be common, it is also difficult to diagnose as the disease can present itself in different ways. The disease leads to damaged plants or stunted plant growth. Downy Mildew is also called Downy Mold.

What is it?

Although Downy Mildew may sound similar to Powdery Mildew, the two diseases are not related. Downy Mildew is caused by organisms that belong to the Peronospora or the Plasmopara genus. It is caused by parasitic organisms similar to algae. Because of the algae relation, Downy Mildew thrives off of wet conditions, and it needs water to survive and spread. Because of the disease requiring wet conditions to live, Downy Mildew is most common in the spring, when the rainfall is heavy and temperatures are still cool.

However, depending on the type of plant Downy Mildew is infecting, it showcases different symptoms. Usually, a Downy Mildew infection looks like a fuzzy growth. The growth can appear gray, white, purple or brown and mostly infects the lower leaves. However, other symptoms can include chlorosis-like mottling or yellow, light green, black, brown or purple spots on the leaves.

How to cure it:

If a plant in your garden does become infected with this disease, the best method to cure Downy Mildew is by using organic methods such as applying neem oil if the Downy Mildew hasn't spread too far, or by



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applying Bonide Copper Fungicide. For more severe cases, you can apply Organocide Plant Doctor. Since Downy Mildew isn't a fungus, fungicides won't work. Also, there aren't any chemical treatments to cure Downy Mildew, although there are some chemical treatments that can prevent it. The best cure is to not have to treat Downy Mildew at all, so follow the tips below to learn preventative methods.

The worst-case scenario is your plants get Downy Mildew and the disease damages the plant or stunts the growth. However, Downy Mildew will normally cure itself and clear up once warmer weather arrives.

How to prevent it:

The best way and easiest treatment for this disease is ensuring your plants don't get the disease at all. The biggest preventative method is learning to water your plants from below and not use overhead watering, as the Downy Mildew requires moisture and



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water to survive and then spread. If you don't overhead water, there is no water on the plants or the plant leaves, meaning the Downy Mildew can't survive or spread. Another way to prevent this disease and keep your plants healthy is by practicing good hygiene in your garden. The disease can survive through the winter on dead plants, so be sure to clear any dead plants out of your garden before the wintertime so you can start spring off with a healthy, clean garden.

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