



Disease and Pest Control

In a nursery situation, it is important to check the plants daily in order to keep them healthy and deal with any problems quickly to avoid the risk of cross contamination. If you are growing plants under glass, the following tips may be useful.

Plant health

Whatever the time of year it is necessary to have adequate ventilation. This is particularly important during the warmer months. The watering schedule will change over the year and plants will dry out quickly in hot, sultry weather. Watering must be carried out either early morning or late afternoon. Shading should also be provided where necessary.

Less water will be required in the winter months but the amount will depend on the individual plant variety. In the main, it is advisable to water from beneath. A minimum temperature will also be needed for many plants and this should be carefully checked and maintained.

Both over watering and under watering can be detrimental and cause plant failure. It will cause irregular growth and if over watered, a plant may become limp and often the stem will rot. In the case of an under watered plant, it will be obvious as the soil will be dry and shrunk from the sides of the pot and the plant will turn crisp and brown

Other signs of damage can be brown spots on leaves, curled leaves, insects on leaves, leaves falling off, mould, and a generally sick looking plant.

Pests and diseases

I give below some examples of problems we have encountered and how we dealt with them.

1. WHITE FLY on Regal Peregolium – This is a common problem with this plant and they must be inspected carefully as the whole plant can quickly become affected. In this example I noticed a few brown leaves on some “bought in “ plants – on closer inspection there were white flies under the leaves and when gently tapped a few flew off. As there was not a huge infestation rubbing them out by hand was a good start. The brown leaves were then removed and the offending plants isolated and sprayed carefully

with Bio Provado. A further spraying took place after about 5 days. In many cases white fly have become immune to sprays and can be difficult to eradicate once they have taken hold and the plant will be unable to cope – hence the importance of regular checks.

2. MILDEW – after a spell of warm humid weather some mildew appeared on some asters we had for sale outside. These were isolated and sprayed with Benomyl a mildew fungicide and repeated at two weekly intervals. The problem did not go away completely but it did not get any worse. Baking soda can also be used for tackling this problem by mixing 1 tablespoon of baking soda with half teaspoon of liquid soap to 5litres water. Water the infected plant well for two days before use and do not (as with any other treatment) use in direct sunlight. This is a common problem with asters as well as monardas and flocks. It is important not to let the soil dry out or to be too damp. Some varieties are more resistant to this problem than others and in our case we shall try and obtain these in the future.

3. Overnight we were once plagued with an enormous number of caterpillars in one section of the glasshouse, mainly on some aubrietia plants and some had been stripped of their leaves in this short time. Each plant was inspected and any caterpillar removed. We try to only use chemicals where really necessary and had this problem continued we would have used Pemethria

4. BOTRYTIS can also be a problem when growing plant in large quantities indoors under glass. We have found correct spacing, good hygiene and avoiding high humidity helps to keep the problem at bay and this year has been good.

We did however experience a small problem with some outside Aubergines we were growing. It became noticeable over a couple of days and two plants had to be destroyed as they were too infected to treat.

To treat Botrytis one should remove all dead and injured plant material before it can become infected. The debris should be burnt or binned (do not compost) to help reduce the spread of infection, and then isolate the infected plants . All surfaces should be regularly cleaned with a disinfectant such as Jeyes Fluid. There are now no fungicides available for specific control of Botrytis but Myclobutanil or Penconazole (found in Systhane Fungus Fighter or Scots Fungus Clear) may give some incidental protection.

Carole
Braywick HEATH Nurseries
Tel. 01628-622510
Email: admin@braywickheath.co.uk
www.braywickheath.co.uk