

# Powdery Mildew

As its name suggests, powdery mildew is visible as a light gray or white dusty coating on leaves, stems, flowers, or fruits. Depending on the plant species, affected leaves may be distorted, and tiny dark dots may appear in the white coating. Powdery mildews can occur on nearly all kinds of plants, but each plant is affected by a different powdery mildew fungus. For example, the fungus that causes powdery mildew on lilac will not infect roses.



Powdery mildew is usually favored by moderate temperatures and humid (but not wet) conditions. It tends to be more severe in the shade and in areas with little airflow. Because of this, putting plants in full sun and cultural practices that promote airflow (such as pruning and appropriate spacing) can help to minimize powdery mildew problems. Keeping plants in good vigor helps them to resist infection. On some plants such as lilac, powdery mildew does not cause serious damage to the plant and can be tolerated. On other plants, damage may be severe and chemical controls may be desired. Many fungicides are labeled for use against powdery mildew on ornamentals, but they are most effective when used preventatively (before infection occurs) and good coverage of the plant is essential.

Because there are many different kinds of powdery mildew fungi, different products may be more effective than others with different strains. If you have not had good results with your current fungicide, it is worth trying another if the problem is recurrent and severe. Products that we have found to be effective in general are Earth Tone 3 in 1 Rose, Vegetable, and ornamental (a natural product containing sulfur); Bayer 'all in one' Rose and Flower care (a systemic fungicide); Fertilomes Triple Action Plus (a neem oil based natural product), and Fertilome's Landscape and Garden Fungicide (chlorothalonil - a well appreciated broad spectrum fungicide).



Don't let the 'powdery mildew blues' get you down... get out there and blow that stuff away!! But remember "an ounce of prevention is worth a ton of cure." We have had excellent results with our garden phlox by getting in there early and spraying every week to ten days through the high season.