



Powdery Mildew – A Plant Disease Observed in Estes Valley Community Garden in 2016-2018

Powdery mildew affects many different vegetable and flowering plants, particularly squash, beans, peas, cucumber and zinnias. This is not a complete list! The visible symptom is spots of a white-ish powder that coats the plant leaves and usually withers or dries the leaves and eventually usually the whole stem as well.

Colorado State University (CSU) Extension has many resources on their website about gardening in the Rocky Mountain environment. Here is a link to their fact sheet on powdery mildew:

<http://extension.colostate.edu/topic-areas/yard-garden/powdery-mildews-2-902/>

This CSU Extension 1-page fact sheet presents easy-to-understand information for the home gardener and is well worth reading. It does include some treatment approaches using chemicals, which are not permitted in the Estes Valley Community Garden. There is a nontoxic control described that uses baking soda and a horticultural oil – this would be permitted in the Garden.

Gardening “old wives’ tales” often state that powdery mildew can be avoided or at least minimized by watering at ground level (don’t wet the leaves), watering early in the day instead of in the evening, and removing affected leaves as soon as you start to notice the powder – then disposing of them in the trash to keep the spores from spreading.

One of the most effective ways to avoid this disease is to plant resistant varieties. Disease resistance is listed on seed packets (and/or descriptions in a seed catalog) and is available for seedlings purchased at nurseries or garden centers. If you don’t see this information on the plant id tag, ask for it before you purchase the plants.

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