Recently a grower called asking about petunia rooted cuttings and recently transplanted petunias with lower leaf discoloration and necrosis. After close inspection, it was determined that the symptoms were a result of powdery mildew. The typical and usually obvious symptoms of dusty white-colored fungal growth were difficult to find and were subtle when present.

Watch for lower leaves that are mottled or chlorotic that eventually turn brown and die. Occasionally, small dark spots or speckles can be observed on the chlorotic leaves. If you see symptoms of discolored and necrotic lower leaves, carefully inspect leaves for signs of powdery mildew. Symptoms and signs are usually first observed on lower or interior leaves. To help identify powdery mildew, you can place a plant or a few chlorotic leaves in a clean plastic bag with a moist (not sopping wet) paper towel. Inspect in a day or so and look for the telltale white fuzz of the powdery mildew fungal growth.

You can always contact your local extension specialist or diagnostic lab for assistance.

Petunias are known to be susceptible to a few species of powdery mildew, including Podosphaera xanthii, Oidium longipes, Golvinomyces cichoracearum, and Golvinomyces orontii, though Podosphaera xanthii is most common in greenhouse production. P. xanthii also infects calibrachoa, verbena, cucurbits, and calendula; if you spot powdery mildew on any one of these crops, keep a close eye on the others.

Practices to help manage powdery mildew include providing good air movement with proper plant spacing, fans, and ventilation and managing relative humidity. Where possible, eliminate poten-
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