



Hort Tips and News
Sandy Welches, Editor, MGV '05

Powdery mildew on Bee Balm

Bee balm (*Monarda didyma*) is a great plant to attract bees, butterflies and hummingbirds to the garden. Unfortunately, it's also a great powdery mildew magnet and you end up losing some or all of your leaves to this disease during the course of the summer. However, it's not a disease that tends to kill the plant; it only makes it look bad.

There are cultural recommendations to help control powdery mildew. These include planting in full sun, providing good air circulation so that early morning dews dry off the leaves, and watering at ground level, keeping those leaves dry. But we live in Ohio, and no matter how good your cultural practices are, bee balm might still get the disease.

In my perennial garden, I have several cultivars of bee balm, and they all tend to get powdery mildew each year; some years are heavier than others. I simply let the plants finish blooming and then cut them back to the ground. Many times, the new growth is not affected (the conditions aren't good for disease development).

My approach is to just accept it and cut them back for a second flush of growth and hope for the best.

Bennett, Pamela J., (2015, May/June). Ask the Expert. *Ohio Gardener*, pp. 6,7

Upgrade your wheelbarrow to carry large loads

A readers' tip in *Fine Gardening Magazine* gives us some practical advice: My husband drilled two holes on either side of my wheelbarrow and attached a bungee cord to one side. When I'm not using the bungee cord, it stays neatly wrapped around the handle, out of the way. But when I want to transport a really large load of brush, I pull the bungee cord over the top of the pile and hook it into the hole on the other side of the wheelbarrow. This keeps branches from falling out or dragging along the ground

Martha Buisman, Gorham, Maine., (2015, August). *Readers' Tips. Fine Gardening*, pp15, 16

A plate holder keeps decay at bay

Remember those woven rattan holders used to hold flimsy paper plates? These can also be used to protect squash, pumpkins and cantaloupes from the rot that occurs when fruit sits directly on moist soil. Slip a paper plate holder under each fragile fruit to help prevent decay.



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