



## Integrated Pest Management Program

Department of Plant Science and Landscape Architecture

Department of Extension

Update for Greenhouse Growers, Tales from the Field, August 9, 2013

Encouraging Good Roots, Rusts, and Miscanthus Blight

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**Encourage Good Root Development on Poinsettias Now** – It's important not to stress young roots by high salt or ec levels, compacted media (due to overwatering) or by not controlling low levels of fungus gnat larvae **early**. Waiting until you see extensive damage (see below), makes it almost impossible for the root system to recover before short days begin. Keeping plants actively growing in August and September by developing a good root system is crucial to having high quality poinsettias.



Figure 1: Fungus gnat feeding damage, Photo by L. Pundt Figure 2: Healthy root system, Photo by R. McGaughey

Many growers report that an application of a biological fungicide such as Root Shield combined with the beneficial nematodes for fungus gnat larvae (Nemasys, Nemashield, Scanmask, Entonem) helps get root systems off to a good start. Continue drench application of beneficial nematodes thru the growing season to prevent fungus gnat feeding so you have a healthy root system.

### Beneficial Nematodes: An Easy Way to Begin Using Biological Control in the Greenhouse

<http://s.uconn.edu/1rs>

**Rusts** – the cool night temperatures and heavy dews are favorable for many foliar diseases including rusts and powdery mildew. For information on chrysanthemum white rust, see

<http://extension.umass.edu/floriculture/fact-sheets/chrysanthemum-white-rust>

### Rusts on Ornamental Grasses

Rust diseases are often seen on ornamental grasses especially susceptible varieties of *Calamagrostis*, (Reed grass), and *Panicum* (Switchgrass) and occasionally *Miscanthus* (Maiden grass). However, more frequently, I see *Miscanthus* Blight on Maiden grass.

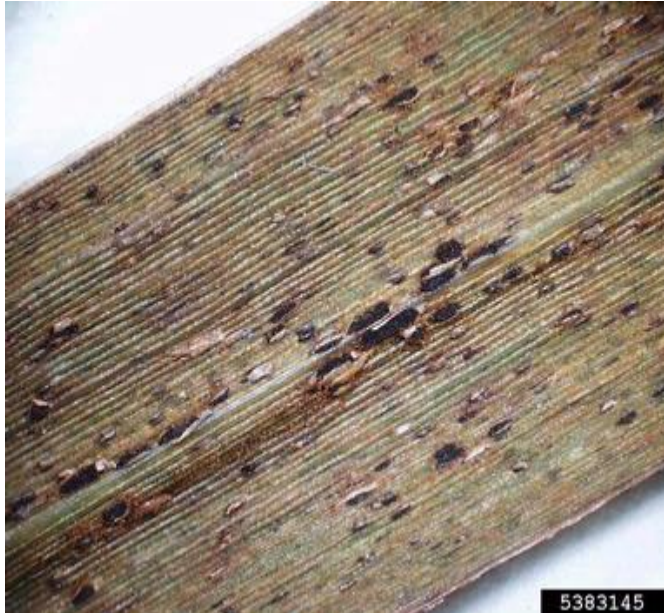


Figure 3: Elizabeth Bush, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Bugwood.org



Figure 4: *Miscanthus* Blight, Photo by L. Pundt

*Miscanthus* can be affected by a number of different leaf spotting fungi. One of the more noticeable is *Miscanthus* Blight, caused by the fungus *Stagonospora*. You will see purplish or rust colored spots and streaks on the leaves, especially the white sections of the variegated leaves. From a distance, with its rusty appearance, it is often mistaken for a rust disease.

### Rust Diseases on Ornamental Crops

<http://s.uconn.edu/1ru>