

Powdery Mildew Solution

Here's a new twist on the popular baking soda-and-oil mix for controlling powdery mildew. Iowa-based garden writer Veronica Fowler offers this version that uses Murphy's Oil Soap. "The baking soda alters the pH of the leaf, making it more difficult for powdery mildew to form," Veronica explains. "The oil soap serves as a spreader-sticker, so that the mix spreads more evenly and doesn't wash off as readily."

Ingredients and Supplies

- 1 gallon warm water
- 3 tablespoons baking soda
- 1 tablespoon Murphy's Oil Soap

Directions

1. Mix all ingredients well.
2. Spray plants when you spot the very first sign of powdery mildew—a grayish coating on leaves. Coat both sides of leaves thoroughly. Spray every 7 to 10 days until daytime temperatures start getting into the 70s.

Yield: About 1 gallon of Powdery Mildew Solution

Note: On plants with chronic powdery mildew problems, use this spray as a preventive. Spray once or twice in very early spring before any sign of disease appears. If you notice powdery mildew, take action to stop its spread. Remove affected leaves and spray with a baking soda solution. Prune or thin to improve air movement around the foliage. Finally, make sure the plant isn't stressed by drought or other problems; stressed plants seem more susceptible to infection.

PLANTS PESTERED BY POWDERY MILDEW

The fungal disease powdery mildew is ugly but it seldom does serious harm. If you're growing a plant that's susceptible to the fungus—check the list below—and don't like how it looks, keep baking soda and Murphy's Oil Soap handy for a quick preventive spray.

Trees and Shrubs

- Crabapples (*Malus* spp.)
- Crape myrtle (*Lagerstroemia indica*)
- English oak (*Quercus robur*)
- Euonymous (*Euonymous* spp.)
- Hackberries (*Celtis* spp.)
- Honeysuckles (*Lonicera* spp.)
- Lilac (*Syringa vulgaris*)
- Privets (*Ligustrum* spp.)
- Roses (*Rosa* spp.)

Flowers

- Bee balm (*Monarda didyma*)
- Dahlias (*Dahlia* hybrids)
- Delphinium (*Delphinium* × *elatum*)
- Phlox (*Phlox paniculata*)
- Zinnia (*Zinnia elegans*)