

A LEAF AND BLOSSOM BLIGHT IS REPORTED
ON AFRICAN VIOLET (SAINTPAULIA)

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Two workers in Michigan, Dr. G. E. Beck and Dr. J. R. Vaughn, have reported in the December, 1949, issue of PHYTOPATHOLOGY a Botrytis leaf and blossom blight of Saintpaulia. The causal fungus is the same causing Botrytis infection on numerous other ornamentals. As Beck and Vaughn report that this disease may occur where conditions are favorable, we feel that all growers producing potted plants should know about it.

The disease appears first under the leaf petioles, near the pot rim, as a small water-soaked lesion which may enlarge rapidly; it eventually consumes the entire petiole and progresses into the leaf blade. This infected area becomes brown to black with age.

The throat of the blossom shows infection by premature fading and a water-soaked appearance. Under conditions of low light intensity, high humidity, and poor air circulation the fungus is evident on the infected areas as a gray-brown mold. Infected blossoms falling on healthy leaves serve to infect the leaves. The disease also may spread from leaf to leaf when they are in contact with each other. Infection appears within 4 days after inoculation under favorable conditions.

Blue Boy, White Lady, Blue Girl, Plum, and Pink Delight varieties were found to be susceptible to Botrytis infection.

Control measures listed include:

1. Adequate spacing -- providing ample light and proper air circulation.

2. Sanitation measures -- remove all diseased and dead tissue.
3. Use of sterile rooting medium and sterilized potting soil.
4. Avoid injury when handling the plants.
5. Maintenance of high vigor -- keep soil fertility high.

This disease also has been reported from Illinois and Georgia. Thus far it has not been seen in Colorado, but it is well to be on the lookout for it, especially on imported stock.