

Poinsettia Scab Identified on Cuttings

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Poinsettia scab caused by the fungus, *Sphaceloma poinsettiae*, was recently identified at the University of Georgia, Extension Plant Pathology Plant Disease Clinic from transplanted cuttings. Scab was first reported from Florida in the 1940's, but its occur-

rence in recent years is relatively rare due to the use of disease-free cuttings. We have not identified scab in Georgia in over four years.

Symptoms of scab infection include small brown leaf spots surrounded by yellow halos, necrosis of the leaf margin or large areas of the leaf, leaf chlorosis and abscission, and white to tan, raised, scab-like, circular to elongated lesions on the stems, petioles, and leaf midribs. The raised lesions are surrounded by thin red

to purple margins. Stem lesions may become sunken, coalesce, and girdle the stems. Infected branches are often abnormally elongated and distorted.

Infected stock plants are the primary source of the disease. Scab is typically managed by using disease-free cuttings. Presently, the scab-infected plants found in Georgia came from one supplier. If you think your plants may be infected, send a sample to the Plant Disease Clinic through your County Extension Agent for diagnosis.

Infected plants should be removed from the greenhouse and discarded. The disease can spread from plant to plant via spores in splashing water. Younger leaves are more susceptible to infection than older leaves and symptoms are often visible one week after inoculation. To prevent scab spread in the greenhouse, plants can be preventively sprayed with either mancozeb (Dithane, Fore, Protect T/O, Mancozeb), thiophanate methyl (Cleary's 3336, Domain) or combination of the two fungicides (Duosan, Zyban). Always use fungicides according to label directions.

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