

DIAGNOSING YOUR SICK PLANT

By Sue Gardner

Adapted from Early Morn African Violet Group Newsletter, May 2005.

The following diagnostic chart assumes that your plant has received good cultural care, with light, fertiliser and water supplied correctly and at a suitable temperature, thus indicating a possible attack by a pest or a disease.

Foliage OK. Leaf axils or around base of stem show white cottony specks.	FOLIAR MEALY BUG
Foliage not fresh and healthy. Leaves appear to have areas dusted with white powder. Axils and stem clean.	POWDERY MILDEW
Foliage not fresh and healthy. Axils and stem clean. Leaves clear of white powdery appearance. Outer leaves drooping and soft, look unhealthy. Small black flies rise from foliage when disturbed.	EXCESSIVE FUNGUS GNATS.
Foliage not fresh and healthy. Axils and stem clean. Leaves clear of white powdery appearance. Outer leaves not drooping. Centre leaves grey and hairy. Cottony white or grey web in plant centre.	BOTRYTIS BLIGHT
Foliage not fresh and healthy. Axils and stem clean. Leaves clear of white powdery appearance. Outer leaves not drooping. Centre leaves grey and hairy. No web but centre leaves grey and hairy. No new centre growth.	MITE
Foliage not fresh and healthy. Axils & stem clean. Leaves clear of white powdery appearance. Outer leaves not drooping. Centre leaves not grey and hairy. Centre leaves hard & stunted, flower stems shortened, flowers distorted.	MITE
Outer foliage healthy. Axils, stem and foliage clean. Flower stems or flowers look as if dusted with white powder.	POWDERY MILDEW
Outer foliage healthy. Axils and stems clean. Foliage and flower stems clean, but flower petals not clean and fresh. Petals have spilt pollen on them or appear dry or have brown edges. Tiny insects scurry from pollen sacs when disturbed.	THRIPS
Outer foliage healthy, centre obviously sick. Centre leaves grey and hairy. Cottony white or grey web in plant centre.	BOTRYTIS BLIGHT
Outer foliage healthy but centre obviously sick. Centre leaves not grey and hairy. Centre leaves hard and stunted, flower stems shortened, flowers distorted.	MITE
Small black, beige or green insects clustered on axils, leaves or stems.	APHIDS
Leaves appear to have areas dusted with white powder.	POWDERY MILDEW
Leaves clear of white powdery appearance. Outer leaves drooping and soft, look unhealthy. Small black flies rise from foliage when disturbed.	EXCESSIVE FUNGUS GNATS
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Outer leaves not drooping. Centre leaves not grey and hairy. Centre leaves hard and stunted, flower stems shortened, flowers distorted.	MITE
Small black flies rise from foliage when disturbed.	EXCESSIVE FUNGUS GNATS
No visible insects on foliage. Roots black or dark brown (not white and healthy)	ROOT ROT (or CROWN ROT)
No visible insects on foliage. Roots not black nor dark brown. Roots swollen with visible nodules.	ROOT NEMATODES
No visible insects on foliage. Roots not black nor dark brown. No root nodules. Rootball (and often reservoir) has white fuzzy areas or slow-moving oval whitish insects (1.5mm long).	SOILY MEALY BUGS
No visible insects on foliage. Roots not black nor dark brown. No root nodules. Small fast moving pale insects in root-ball, visible jumping in reservoir.	EXCESSIVE SPRINGTAILS
No visible insects on foliage. Roots not black nor dark brown. No root nodules. White healthy roots, no visible insects. Centre leaves grey and hairy. Cottony white or grey web in plant centre.	BOTRYTIS BLIGHT
No visible insects on foliage. Roots not black nor dark brown. No root nodules. White healthy roots, no visible insects. Centre leaves grey and hairy. No web but centre leaves grey and hairy. No new centre growth.	MITE
No visible insects on foliage. Roots not black nor dark brown. No root nodules. White healthy roots, no visible insects. Centre leaves not grey and hairy. Centre leaves hard and stunted, flower stems shortened, flowers distorted.	MITE
Roots black or dark brown (not white and healthy).	ROOT ROT (or CROWN ROT)