**Impatiens wallerana**¹

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**Introduction**

Impatiens are easy to grow and bloom well in shade forming masses of bright red, orange, apricot or white color along the stems (Fig. 1). Regular watering is an important factor in growing good plants. Daily irrigation produces the best plants in sandy soil in Florida. Fertilize occasionally during the growing season to keep plants green and growing. Some varieties are reportedly more tolerant of sun but all types wilt badly when exposed to even short periods of direct sunlight during the summer. Sun tolerant selections usually do well in south Florida in full sun only during the winter. The plants grow to a height of from 6 to 24 inches. Plant on 12 to 18 inch centers to quickly form a solid mass.

**General Information**

Scientific name: *Impatiens wallerana*

Pronunciation: im-PAY-shenz wall-lur-RAY-nuh

Common name(s): Impatiens

Family: Balsaminaceae

Plant type: annual

USDA hardiness zones: all zones (Fig. 2)

Planting month for zone 7: Jun; Jul

Planting month for zone 8: May; Jun; Jul; Aug

Planting month for zone 9: Apr; Sep; Oct; Nov

Planting month for zone 10 and 11: Feb; Mar; Apr; Sep; Oct; Nov; Dec

Origin: not native to North America

Uses: mass planting; container or above-ground planter; hanging basket; border; attracts butterflies; suitable for growing indoors

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Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Growth rate: fast
Texture: medium

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: alternate
Leaf type: simple
Leaf margin: serrate
Leaf shape: ovate
Leaf venation: bowed
Leaf type and persistence: not applicable
Leaf blade length: 4 to 8 inches
Leaf color: green
Fall color: not applicable
Fall characteristic: not applicable

Flower

Flower color: white; red; orange; apricot
Flower characteristic: showy

Fruit

Fruit shape: no fruit
Fruit length: no fruit

Fruit cover: no fruit
Fruit color: not applicable
Fruit characteristic: inconspicuous and not showy

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: not applicable
Current year stem/twig color: green
Current year stem/twig thickness: thick

Culture

Light requirement: plant grows in part shade/part sun; plant grows in the shade
Soil tolerances: clay; sand; acidic; loam
Drought tolerance:
Soil salt tolerances: unknown
Plant spacing: 12 to 18 inches
Other

**Roots:** not applicable  
**Winter interest:** not applicable  
**Outstanding plant:** not particularly outstanding  
**Invasive potential:** may self-seed each year  
**Pest resistance:** long-term health usually not affected by pests

Use and Management

In USDA hardiness zones 10 and 11, Impatiens can be planted in the fall for winter and spring color. Plants often reseed themselves, maintaining year round color in shaded landscapes in USDA hardiness zones 9, 10 and 11. Shoots sprout from the base of the stem in USDA hardiness zone 9 after cold weather injures or kills the top of the plant. Seeds often germinate and grow in the spring in areas where frost and cold winters kill plants. Plants are difficult to establish in summer in Florida due to high temperatures unless they are in a totally shaded location and irrigated daily. Plant in the cooler part of the spring season in north and central Florida.

Impatiens are propagated by seed or cuttings. Cuttings are taken before plants are exposed to cold. The seed germinates in two to three weeks at 70-degrees F. Do not cover the seed as light is necessary for germination. Impatiens seedlings are easily injured during transplanting.

Cultivars are available for different sizes, flower color and sun tolerance.

Pests and Diseases

Aphids suck plant juices causing distorted growth. Spotted cucumber beetle feeds on the blossoms. Tarnished plant bug feeds on the new shoots causing them to turn black. Leaf spots are an infrequent problem. Infected leaves can be picked off.