



Cooperative Extension Service  
Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences

## *Impatiens wallerana*<sup>1</sup>

Edward F. Gilman, Teresa Howe<sup>2</sup>

### 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

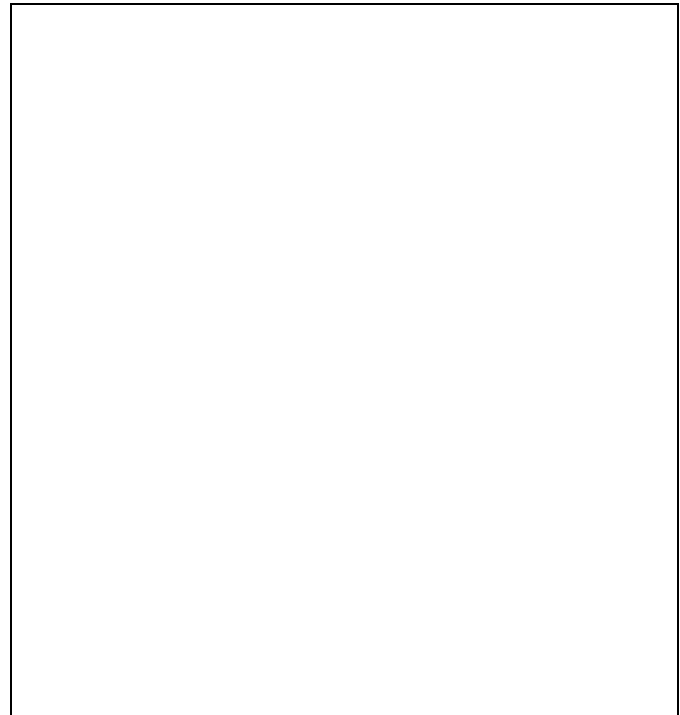


Figure 1. Impatiens.

**Availability:** generally available in many areas within its hardiness range

### Description

**Height:** .5 to 2 feet

**Spread:** 1 to 3 feet

**Plant habit:** spreading

**Plant density:** dense

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2. Edward F. Gilman, professor, Environmental Horticulture Department, Teresa Howe, coordinator - Research Programs/Services, Gulf Coast REC, Bradenton, Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida, Gainesville, 32611.

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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.