

## Sanitation Strategies for Greenhouse Growers

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In light of the recent issues with Tobacco Mosaic Virus and Southern Bacterial Wilt greenhouse growers need to re-think their overall strategies on sanitation. The following items should be reviewed by all greenhouse growers.

- Eliminate crop debris, old plants and weeds prior to filling a greenhouse so you don't carryover problems to your new crop.
- Thoroughly clean benches, floors, and irrigation systems with a disinfectant between crops such as Greenshield, Physan 20, Prevent, Zerotel, or bleach.
- You may want to consider power washing structures and walkways with soap and water before using disinfectant.
- Always collect, bag and remove from your greenhouse; crop residue, weeds, prunings, old blossoms and unmarketable plants. Put them in a dumpster for removal from your property.
- Restrict entry into growing areas to necessary personnel, supervise all visitors.
- Require everyone to clean shoes before entering your growing areas by removing soil, then use foot baths/mats with a disinfectant at each entry point in a greenhouse change disinfectant daily in foot bath/mats. Wash floor mats at least weekly.
- Post signs and instruct all employees to wash hands with at a minimum soap before work, at intervals throughout the day and again before handling plants after eating. Consider hand sanitizing products in addition to soap.
- Provide convenient hand washing facilities near entrances and throughout production and propagation units.
- Think about the use of protective clothing (disposable or sterile coveralls, gloves and shoe coverings) during potting, transplanting or when taking cuttings during propagation –also when rouging diseased plants
- Remove and dispose of used protective clothing before working with healthy plants.
- Instruct people to keep feet off of benches.
- Do not reuse growing media that has fallen on the floor during potting, or during container filling operations.
- Anything that touches the floor should be disinfected before it touches any growing surfaces.
- Keep hose nozzles off the ground by using hose hangers.
- Be sure to purchase high quality certified, disease free stock whenever possible. Visit your stock plant supplier to see what their sanitation program is.
- Quarantine new stock in a separate greenhouse. Inspect for disease and insects. Use sticky cards in quarantine area.
- Send in samples to verify its pest free to MSU Diagnostic Services or use in-house Elisa test kits for certain diseases.
- Isolate mother sock from production range, don't have stock plants in your growing areas.
- Maintain disease free stock with correct and effective fungicide treatments.
- Use the proper disinfectants for your knives, scissors, or cutting tools after taking cuttings. Disinfect at the least after: each bench or each variety, each cultivar or ship date.

The following are a few sources\* for entryway footbath mats, disposable boots and gloves that have been used successfully by greenhouse growers.

### **Footbath Mats**

- Gemplers 1-800-382-8473  
Item No. TM-222 Sanitizing 24" x 32" Footbath Mat
- The St. George Company 1-800-461-4299  
Disinfection Mat 33" x 3" x 1-1/4"  
Holds 2.65 gallons of disinfectant. Nice high quality mat

### **Disposable Boots**

- Lab Safety Supply 1-800-356-0783  
Part #P4573 "Knot a Boot"
- Gemplers 1-800-382-8473  
They have a wide number of disposable boots

### **Gloves**

- Gemplers 1-800-382-8473  
They handle a wide variety of latex and other gloves. Most drug stores also carry latex and non-latex gloves as well.

\*MSU Extension does not endorse any of these products and this is by no means a complete list of all vendors.