

Alternatives to Garden Impatiens

Since garden impatiens, *Impatiens walleriana*, have been severely impacted by a new downy mildew disease (and will likely continue to be impacted in future years), growers, landscapers, and homeowners are seeking alternatives to this ubiquitous garden plant. Impatiens have been a reliable garden plant for many years due to their color choice, growth habit, price point, and shade tolerance. While it might seem challenging to find plants that will be a suitable replacement, there are many great plant selections that are viable substitutions. The tables below list some options for shade tolerant plants, along with information on garden size. Don't focus on the negative... use this opportunity to grow different and exciting plants!

Annuals for Shade

Plant	Garden Height (in)	Garden Width (in)
Alternanthera	18-36	24-36
Begonia rex hybrid	8-12	8-10
Begonia boliviensis	10-14	14-20
Begonia x hiemalis (Reiger, hiemalis)	10-14	10-12
Begonia x hybrida (many winged, landscape, and trailing types)	from 10-12 to 28-34 (‘Whopper’: 15-18; ‘Big’: 24; ‘Baby Wing’ 12-15; ‘Dragon Wing’: 12-15; ‘Gryphon’: 14-16; ‘Ikon’: 16-20)	from 10-12 to 30-36 (‘Whopper’: 28; ‘Big’: 12-15; ‘Baby Wing’: 10-12; ‘Dragon Wing’: 15-18; ‘Gryphon’: 16-18; ‘Ikon’: 18)
Begonia x semperflorens-cultorum (wax-leaf, fibrous)	from 8-10 to 9-12	from 6-8 to 7-9
Begonia x tuberhybrida (non-stop, tuberous)	8-12	8-16
Browalia	10-12	12-14
Coleus	from 8-10 to 20-32	from 8-10 to 18-24
Hypoestes (polka dot plant)	10-14	12-14
New Guinea Impatiens (including SunPatiens)	from 10-12 to 14-16	from 10-12 to 14-16
Oxalis	from 6-10 to 12-16	from 8-12 to 12-14
Perilla	18-36	12-18
Torenia	6-8, 8-12	6-8, 18-24
Scutellaria	10-12	10-12

Annuals for Partial Shade

There are many options for annuals for partial shade, some include:

Plant	Garden Height (in)	Garden Width (in)
Diascia	12-16	12-14
Dichondra	24-36	up to 72
Ivy geranium	12-15	12-15
Heliotrope	12-15	10-15
Ipomoea	12-14	12-14
Lobelia	from 5-8 to 8-12	from 6-8 to 18-24
Nemesia	12-14	10-12
Nicotiana	from 10-12 to 16-18	10-12
Plectranthus	from 6-8 to 24-30	from 8-10 to 24-30
Salvia splendens	from 8-10 to 24-30	from 8-10 to 10-12

Some notes:

- New Guinea impatiens are NOT susceptible to impatiens downy mildew.
- It is sometimes assumed by some that New Guinea impatiens is a sun plant. Yes, New Guinea impatiens perform better than garden impatiens in the sun, *but* New Guinea impatiens generally perform equally as well or better in the shade.
- Coleus can also be susceptible to its own downy mildew. If plants will be used in shady sites with overhead irrigation, consider resistant varieties. Visit http://msue.anr.msu.edu/news/coleus_downy_mildew for more information.
- Also consider hardy plants such as ajuga, heuchera, lamium, lysimachia, as well as various grass and grass-like plants.
- **Don't plant shade plants in the sun! For sunny sites annual vinca, angelonia, petunia, geranium, marigold, zinnia, celosia, pentas, gazania, portulaca may be good choices!**

Source of garden height and width information: Ball Redbook, 18th ed., various plant catalogs.

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*(adapted from a publication by Nora Catlin,
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