

GROWERTALKS

Culture Notes

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Water, Water Everywhere

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Maybe you've seen it before: The germination on your trays looks great. Everything is going well in Stage 2, then the plants start looking yellow and chlorotic. You think they seem a little hungry, so you feed them, but it doesn't help. Soon, plugs start dying one by one and you're left wondering, "What happened to that great germination I just had?"

You might be experiencing the effects of overwatering. Improper watering can have devastating effects and result in losses of up to 15% in some crops.

Here are a few tips from the experts at Benary on which crops are most susceptible and the tell-tale signs to look for.

Crops that are most susceptible to overwatering:

- Begonias
- Celosia
- Dusty Miller
- Pentas
- Primula
- Portulaca
- Rudbeckia

What to look for:

- **Water sitting on top of the plug.** This is probably the most obvious sign, but often overlooked.
- **Algae on top of the soil.** Usually a sign of overwatering, but can also be caused by improper watering when water cannot move freely from the top of the plug to the bottom.
- **Chlorotic, yellow foliage.** Because the roots are saturated, they cannot take up nutrients properly. Fertilizing will either have no effect or could make the yellowing worse.
- **Brown roots.** When roots are saturated for a long time, there's no airflow to keep them white and healthy looking.
- **Begonia seedlings also may not root in when you use too much water pressure.** You'll notice they move around on the media even though they seem buried.

Pictured: An overwatered portulaca plug tray.



What can you do?

- Consult your Benary Culture Guide for the specific watering requirements of your crop.
- Look at the roots of your plugs regularly. They will help you identify the problem early.
- Check to make sure the EC is within the suggested guidelines.
- It's critical to begin a good wet-to-dry cycle to prevent algae growth and help with the uptake of nutrients. What day to start the wet-dry cycle depends on the crop, but it's usually in Stage 2.
- Increase the amount of horizontal airflow. This will help dry out the media and allow for better nutrient uptake.

For more information, visit www.Benary.com or contact your Benary Sales Rep. **GT**

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