



Impatiens Survival after Pruning

January 12

Question: My impatiens look beautiful. They will probably get leggy and distressed looking when the weather warms. Can I cut them back to revitalize them?

- Martha C., e-mail

Answer: Impatiens are a cool season annual. It is a plant for sun or shade. By May, most plants will have melted away, however, some will survive through the summer, albeit the worst for wear. Impatiens may become leggy by January when planted in the fall of the previous year. They can be cut-back during the cool of winter to reinvigorate them. When cut to stubs of about 5 inches long, it will take about four to five weeks for the stubs to releaf and begin flowering. Regrowth after cut-backs work best when plants are growing in partial shade. Chances are the plants will provide several additional weeks of flowering before the heat of spring sets in.

Stephen Brown is a horticulture agent with the Lee County Extension Service. Submit questions by calling the horticulture desk at 461-7504 between 9 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. or by e-mailing brownsh@leegov.com. Visit his web page at <http://lee.ifas.ufl.edu/hort/GardenHome.shtml> "Garden Doctor" video clips <http://lee.ifas.ufl.edu/Hort/Video.shtml> and flowering trees information at http://lee.ifas.ufl.edu/Hort/GardenPubsA_Z.shtml