**Ixora Having Trouble Establishing**

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**Question:** I am trying to find out what is wrong with my ixora. The plants are about 2 feet high and were planted last year. They are the bigger leaf ixoras. The leaves used to be shiny and dark green. Now they are dull looking. There are no black spots on the leaves. Some of the leaves are curling up. Could you give me several diseases or insects that might be causing the problem?

- Sonia K., South Fort Myers

**Answer:** This could be a case of plant acclimation; a plant going from good to bad and has to adjust to the latter. Ixora plants grown in plant nurseries are produced in a soil-mix that allows for healthy growth. These plants are routinely transplanted into “fill” soils of alkaline pH. This turns the leaves of these acid-loving plants yellow, and in many cases, weakens the plants. A pot-bound plant, planting too high or too low, insufficient or excessive irrigation, or excess mulch may be bad cultural practices that weaken a plant. Be sure that your ixora is planted in soil, not in the mulch. It may also need watering twice a week to become established. You can do this by using a hose with an automatic shut-off. Fertilizing with an acidifier may also improve the plant’s appearance. Curling leaves may be caused by aphids sucking sap out of the leaves. If the primary cause of the decline is cultural, listing several diseases or insects may be a good academic exercise but may not bring you any closer to a solution. Here is a University of Florida link to more on ixora [http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/EP164](http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/EP164)

Stephen Brown is a horticulture agent with the Lee County Extension Service. Submit questions by calling the horticulture desk at 533-7504 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](http://lee.ifas.ufl.edu/hort/GardenHome.shtml) “Garden Doctor” video clips [http://lee.ifas.ufl.edu/Hort/Video.shtml](http://lee.ifas.ufl.edu/Hort/Video.shtml) and flowering trees information at [http://lee.ifas.ufl.edu/Hort/GardenPubsA_Z.shtml](http://lee.ifas.ufl.edu/Hort/GardenPubsA_Z.shtml)