



Myrtle rust

Have you seen symptoms of myrtle rust?

If you suspect myrtle rust, contact Biosecurity Queensland by calling **13 25 23** or visiting www.biosecurity.qld.gov.au

This brochure was compiled with reference from...

*Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation Biosecurity Queensland

*The Australian Network for Plant Conservation

* *Eugenia reinwardtiana* (beach cherry) Images from



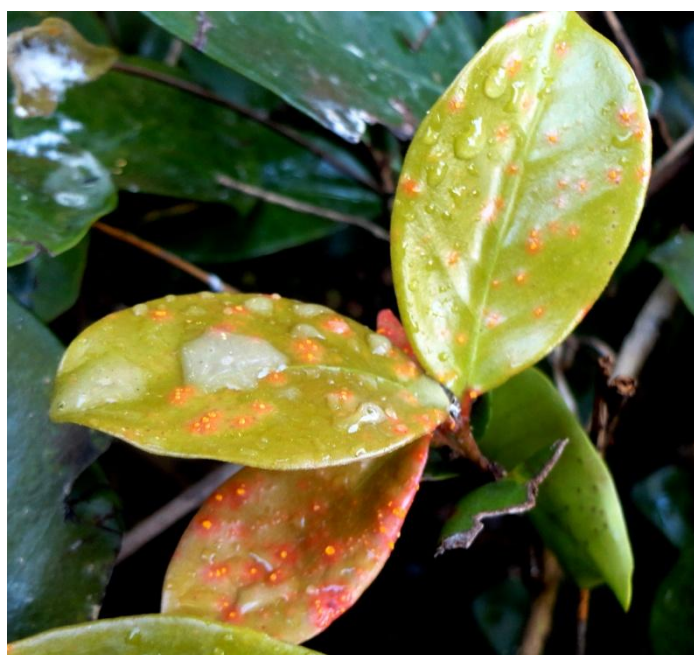
Myrtle rust is a serious fungal disease that affects plants in the Myrtaceae family. This family includes many Australian natives such as paperbark, lilly pilly, bottlebrush and tea tree.

Myrtle rust cannot be eradicated—it will continue to spread in Queensland because it produces large numbers of spores that are easily spread by wind, human activity and animals.

However, your reports of suspected cases are vital in helping us determine how far myrtle rust has spread and learn more about the disease.



Myrtle rust on *Eugenia reinwardtiana* (beach cherry)



Myrtle rust on *Eugenia reinwardtiana* (beach cherry)

What does myrtle rust look like?

The first signs of rust infection are tiny lesions or pustules, usually on young actively growing leaves and shoots. These lesions produce masses of bright yellow spores. Older lesions may produce dark brown spores, or a mixture of the two spore types. On some hosts such as *Melaleuca*, the lesions may cause purpling of the leaves and shoots. The disease can also attack the flowers and fruit of some hosts.

What do I do if I see myrtle rust?

If you suspect you have seen myrtle rust, report it to Biosecurity Queensland by calling 13 25 23 or visiting www.biosecurity.qld.gov.au

Myrtle rust is a serious fungal disease that affects plants in the Myrtaceae family. This family includes Australian natives such as rose apple (lilly pilly), bottle brush and tea tree.

Myrtle rust also affects many plants that are commonly found in gardens. These include:

- willow myrtle
- thready-bark myrtle
- scrub cherry
- lemon scented myrtle.

Myrtle rust cannot be eradicated and will continue to spread in Queensland as it produces large numbers of spores that are easily spread by wind, human activity and animals. However, to determine how far it has spread and to learn more about the disease Biosecurity Queensland needs to know if you think you have seen myrtle rust. Call 13 25 23 or visit www.biosecurity.qld.gov.au to report any suspect sightings.

What does myrtle rust look like?

Myrtle rust attacks young, soft, actively growing leaves, shoot tips and young stems. It also attacks fruit and flowers of susceptible plants.

The first signs of rust infection are tiny, raised spots or pustules. After a few days, the pustules turn a distinctive egg-yolk yellow colour.

Some plant species such as frangipanis, hibiscus and palm trees may display symptoms that look like myrtle rust; however, because these plants are not in the Myrtaceae family, they do not have myrtle rust.

How does myrtle rust spread?

Myrtle rust can spread rapidly because it produces large numbers of spores that can be dispersed over long distances by wind. The disease can also spread through the movement of:

- infected or contaminated plant material, nursery stock, plant cuttings, flowers and germ plasm
- animals such as bees, birds, bats and possums that have been in contact with rust spores
- contaminated plant waste, timber, wood packaging and dunnage
- contaminated equipment and tools used on or around plants (e.g. chainsaws, secateurs)
- contaminated clothing, shoes and other personal effects.

Myrtle rust is likely to infect plants in wet and humid conditions and rust pustules can mature to release spores in as little as 10–12 days. Spores can survive for up to three months in the environment.

Can I move my plants?

Moving plants within Queensland

If you are trading or selling plants within Queensland, you must ensure that you do not have any plants that you know are, or suspect could be, infected with myrtle rust.

Penalties apply to individuals and businesses that sell, or possess for sale, plants infected with myrtle rust.

People moving myrtaceous plants or plant material are encouraged to check that the plants are free from myrtle rust before moving them. Where possible, avoid moving host plants from known infected areas to areas where the disease is not yet established.

Moving plants interstate from Queensland

There are conditions for the movement of myrtaceous nursery stock from Queensland to South Australia, Victoria and the Northern Territory. Visit the Biosecurity Queensland website for an outline of these conditions.

There are no conditions for myrtle rust entry from Queensland to New South Wales.

Bringing plants into Queensland

Plants being sent to Queensland from another state or territory do not need to be accompanied by a Plant Health Certificate or be inspected by an accredited person prior to despatch.

However, you should ensure that any plants being sent to Queensland from another state where myrtle rust has been detected are not infected, or suspected to be infected, with myrtle rust.

What do I do if I see myrtle rust?

If you suspect you have seen myrtle rust call Biosecurity Queensland on 13 25 23 or visit www.biosecurity.qld.gov.au Reporting the disease can help Biosecurity Queensland track how far it has spread and which plants it is affecting.

The more that is known about the disease, the more we can learn about how to manage it and its potential impact.

There are a number of options available for managing myrtle rust-infected plants on your property:

- spraying with fungicide
- removing and disposing of diseased plants
- removing and disposing of healthy plants as a preventative measure

The option that you select should be appropriate to your specific situation.

For further information on these options contact Biosecurity Queensland by calling 13 25 23 or visiting www.biosecurity.qld.gov.au.

Reference...

The Australian Network for Plant Conservation
What to do if you see a myrtaceous plant with brown lesions or yellow pustules on leaf or stems: Do NOT attempt to take a sample (the spores are too easily spread). If possible, take photographs without disturbance, make a careful note of location (or a precise GPS reading), and report your sighting immediately. Also ask advice about decontamination precautions for clothing, footwear, equipment and vehicles.