



Fire and Rescue NSW Operations Bulletin 2011/02 Minimise spread of Myrtle Rust fungus

Issue

Myrtle Rust is a fungal disease that has the potential to cause significant damage to native flora in National Parks, State Forests, on residential properties and in the cut flower, timber and nursery industries.



You may come in contact with Myrtle Rust when conducting community engagement, hazard reduction, rescue or firefighting activities. It is important that you make every effort to assess areas you are working in to identify, report and minimise the chance of spreading the fungus.

Myrtle Rust can be spread by different means including wind, movement of infected plants and movement of people and vehicles engaged in activities that expose them to the rust.

How do you identify the fungus?



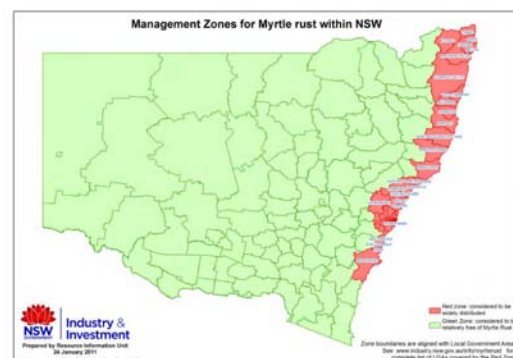
Myrtle Rust is relatively easy to identify. It produces spore-filled lesions on young actively growing leaves, shoots, flower buds and fruits. For a list and images of affected plants see the [Primary Industries website](#).

Infected leaves may become buckled or twisted and may die. Sometimes the infected spots are surrounded by a purple ring. Older lesions may contain dark brown spores. New plant growth may be stunted or killed. Highly susceptible plants may die.

Where can it be found?

Myrtle Rust was first detected on a NSW central coast property in late April 2010. It has now been detected in many locations in Queensland and NSW and is spreading across NSW and Australia.

Myrtle Rust is known to be commonly found in the Red Zone shown on the map (for a more detailed map see the [Primary Industries website](#)). In this zone the rust is found in the full range of landscapes



and settings, including bushland reserves, parks, streets, home gardens and commercial operations such as plant nurseries and timber plantations.

Myrtle Rust is not commonly found in the Green Zone. It is important when working in or travelling between zones that appropriate actions are taken to ensure the rust is not spread.

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Actions

If working in an infected area or where infection is suspected:

- Take advice from local land managers before undertaking activities.
- Officers should notify all staff working in the affected area of suspected infection.
- Do not remove any plants from an infected site.

After working in an infected area or where infection is suspected:

- Wash down vehicles and equipment thoroughly before moving to another location.
- Wash down hoses and equipment on site and place in sunlight at the fire station for 24 hours before next using again.
- Ensure duty wear is left at the fire station before departing from each shift, and place PPE in for dry cleaning as soon as possible.
- Ensure boots, helmets and exposed skin are wiped down with alcohol wipes and washed with water.

In the Red Zone, report infection of plants that are not on Primary Industries' list by sending photographs to biosecurity@industry.nsw.gov.au.

In the Green Zone, report any suspected infection to the hotline 1800 084 881 or send photographs to biosecurity@industry.nsw.gov.au.

Further Reading

Updates on the Myrtle Rust situation, latest maps, management advice and frequently asked questions are available on the [Primary Industries website](#).

More questions and answers are available on the [Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service website](#).

Contact officer

Superintendent Darryl Dunbar, Manager Bushland Urban Interface Section
0488 787 237 or Darryl.Dunbar@fire.nsw.gov.au.

Noted, Station Commander	A	B	C	D	Other
Duty Commander					

Previous Operations Bulletin: [2011/01, Interface Operations and Community Fire units.](#)