

# Myrtle rust – general information

## Biosecurity Queensland fact sheet

### What is Myrtle rust?

Myrtle rust is a serious fungal disease caused by *Uredo rangelii* that affects plants in the Myrtaceae family. In Australia, it has been identified so far on *Agonis*, *Callistemon* and *Syncarpia* species. However, the exact host range is not yet known.

### What are the symptoms?

Myrtle rust attacks leaves of susceptible hosts. First signs of rust infection are tiny raised spots or pustules on infected tissue. After a few days pustules turn a distinctive egg-yolk yellow colour. The rust poses no threat to human health.

### How does Myrtle rust spread?

Myrtle rust is spread by very small spores. These spores are mostly carried by wind. The disease can also spread through the movement of:

- infected plant material such as seeds, nursery stock and germplasm
- flying vectors (such as bees and birds)
- contaminated timber, wood packaging and dunnage
- contaminated freight containers
- contaminated clothing, shoes, equipment and other personal effects

Myrtle rust has the potential to spread rapidly. It is unknown at this stage how quickly signs of this particular strain of rust will be seen on susceptible plants.

### What do I do if I think I have seen Myrtle rust?

Do not move any plant material you suspect of being infected—this can spread the disease.

**Immediately** report any suspect plants by calling Biosecurity Queensland on 13 25 23 or the Exotic Plant Pest Hotline on 1800 084 881.

Early detection gives us the best options for disease management.