

# Issue Alert!



Nursery & Garden Industry  
Australia

## Exotic Plant Pest

**Issue #:** 01/10

**Date:** 30 April 2010

**To:** Australian Nursery Industry

**Subject:** Detection of Emergency Plant Pest

**Background:**

Plant material sampled from a cut flower/foilage producer in NSW has been confirmed as *Uredo rangelii* (**Myrtle rust**). This is the first time this fungus has been found in Australia and is identified as a disease of significance in the Nursery Industry Biosecurity Plan.

The Consultative Committee on Emergency Plant Pests (CCEPP) has agreed that further survey work is required around the infected property. Trace forward and trace back actions are occurring to find other possible incidents of this plant rust. Infected plant material has and is being treated with fungicides to contain the infection on site while further surveys are undertaken.

This is the first known identification of the *Uredo rangelii* (Myrtle rust) on *Agonis flexuosa* (Willow Myrtle), a species native to Western Australia but planted widely across Australia as an ornamental. Once more is known about the extent of spread of the rust, a response plan will be considered by the CCEPP.

**Myrtle Rust:**

This plant disease is closely related to the fungi causing guava rust, which is also known as eucalyptus rust, and part of a complex of rusts that infect the Myrtaceae family of plants which include many Australian native species.

Rusts are highly transportable. Their spores can be spread via contaminated clothing, infected plant material, on equipment and by insect movement and wind dispersal.

These types of rust affect commercial plant growing operations and native ecosystems. The response is being managed in consultation with state and commonwealth environment agencies.

**Industry Response:**

The NGIA has agreed to distribute this Pest Alert nationally to encourage the nursery industry to inspect your crops/stock and on-site vegetation for signs of this rust disease. A fact sheet with photos of the disease and information on identifying and reporting the disease is attached for industry to quickly detect any further infected sites across Australia.

**PLEASE REPORT ANY SUSPECT DETECTIONS ON  
1800 084 881**



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# PEST ALERT

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Pest Alert April 2010

## Identification Sheet *Uredo rangelii* (Myrtle rust)

The fungus *Uredo rangelii* (Myrtle rust) has been detected on a commercial property on the New South Wales central coast. Myrtle rust is considered to be part of a group of rust fungi collectively known as eucalyptus/guava rust.

Early identification of this rust is vital to eradication efforts.



*Uredo rangelii* on *Agonis flexuosa*

### Host species:

In Australia, Myrtle rust has recently been detected on *Agonis* (willow myrtle), *Syncarpia* (turpentine) and *Callistemon* (bottlebrush) species. Internationally, there are unconfirmed reports of infection on some *Eucalyptus* species. It has also been confirmed on *Myrtus*, *Syzygium* and *Heteropyxis* species overseas.

### Spread:

Rusts are highly transportable. The most common dispersal mechanism is via wind but they may also attract bees who work the spores on leaves. The spores can also be spread via contaminated clothing, infected plant material and insect movement.



*Uredo rangelii* on *Agonis flexuosa*

**Identification:**

Myrtle rust produces lesions on young, actively growing leaves and shoots, as well as on fruits and sepals. Leaves may become buckled or twisted as a result of infection. On turpentine and callistemon rust lesions are purple in colour, with masses of bright yellow or orange-yellow spores. Occasionally, they may have dark brown spores. Severe rust disease in young trees may kill shoot tips, causing loss of leaders and a bushy habit.

**Any rust on myrtaceae should be reported.**



*Uredo rangelii* on Turpentine

**Reporting:**

**To report suspect cases of Myrtle rust please call  
the  
Exotic Plant Pest Hotline: 1800 084 881**