

Transcript: What to do if you find myrtle rust

Video length: 2:51

[Video begins. Pleasant music is playing. A logo appears with the words: 'Myrtle rust – Community Education'. Below it, the words 'If you find myrtle rust' appear. During the video, some of the advice that Karin gives appears as words on the screen. The shots change between the instructions, and Karin in the forest outside.]

[Karin Van der Walt (Conservation & Science Advisor, Otari Native Botanic Garden) speaks in front of the camera outside.]

Karin Van der Walt (Conservation & Science Advisor, Otari Native Botanic Garden): "Report suspected myrtle rust.

"It is important that we understand where myrtle rust has spread to, and where it is active. Look out for signs of myrtle rust. If you suspect you're seeing the symptoms, do the following:

- Call the MPI Exotic Pest and Disease Hotline immediately on 0800 80 99 66
- If you have a camera or camera phone, take clear pictures of the whole plant, the affected leaf, and a close-up of the spores or affected area of the plant."

Karin: "Do not attempt to self-treat trees and plants with a fungicide, either as a cure or to prevent infection by myrtle rust.

"We are still building a picture of where the disease is present nationally. If people are using preventative sprays, it could suppress the symptoms, making it difficult for us to make the best management decisions for the country.

"Once you have reported your find, choose how you want to manage the myrtle rust.

"You can either:

- Care for the plants and monitor the impact of the disease
- Remove or prune the infected plants and securely dispose of the waste"

Karin: "Please note, if you're transporting and disposing of infected plant material, you must comply with the general permission conditions issued by the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI).

"You are not required to remove your infected plant. You may leave it in place and monitor the progress of myrtle rust on the infected plant.

"If you leave your plants, what will happen to them will depend on the species, the size, and their general health."

[Shot changes to images of trees in the myrtle family, and of leaves showing myrtle rust. The shot then changes back to Karin.]

Karin: "Monitoring the progression of the disease on various myrtle species will help us to identify resistant plants and individuals in the long-term.

"Some myrtle plants, especially larger, established trees, may survive an initial infection. It's possible that they will continue to grow, reproduce, and provide a home for plants, birds, and insects.

"We do recommend that you avoid pruning in the warm weather, if possible. Otherwise, it could encourage new growth, which is more susceptible to myrtle rust.

"You may choose to prune or remove infected plants from your property. If you would like to do this, you will require specialist equipment or technical skills. We recommend you consider using an arborist or contractor to remove infected plant material from your property, especially if you have large trees."

[The shot changes to show a photo of the 'How to remove infected myrtle plants' factsheet guide.]

Karin: "A step-by-step guide is also available to help you. It is called 'How to remove infected myrtle plants.'"

Karin: "Our next video shows you what to do should you decide to do it yourself."

[Video ends]