

Myrtle rust update

In recent weeks, several myrtle rust detections were made outside the metropolitan Melbourne area - at Ballarat, Shepparton, Tynong North and East Gippsland.

As of 11 May, there were 60 detections in Victoria (see map overleaf) and the disease has recently been found on several additional species (see 'Affected species' list).

It is expected that fewer detections will be made during the coming winter months, but there is a potential for the disease to flourish during spring.

The focus of the myrtle rust program remains on management and monitoring to minimise its spread and impact.

Community engagement

The nursery, cut flower, forestry and beekeeping industries, and agencies including local government, Parks Victoria, VicForests, the Department of Sustainability and Environment and the Royal Botanic Gardens, are all represented on the Victoria Myrtle Rust Coordination Committee and are participating in myrtle rust management and/or monitoring.

Several of these agencies are already dealing with detections on land which they manage, in line with this phase of the program.

DPI's role in this phase is to provide technical advice and information to assist people to manage myrtle rust and to monitor the spread of, and species affected by, the disease.

More than 1,000 people have attended DPI's information sessions on how to identify and manage myrtle rust. To express interest in attending an information session, please email plant.protection@dpi.vic.gov.au



Myrtle rust on *Callistemon* 'Harkness' bottlebrush

Affected species

In Victoria, myrtle rust has now been found on:

- *Acmena smithii* (lilly pilly)
- *Agonis flexuosa* (willow myrtle)
- *Austromyrtus dulcis* (midgen berry/midyim)
- *Backhousia citriodora* (lemon-scented myrtle)
- *Callistemon* 'Harkness' (bottebrush)
- *Callistemon* 'King's Park Special' (bottebrush)
- *Callistemon viminalis* (bottlebrush)
- *Chamelaucium uncinatum* (Geraldton wax)
- *Eucalyptus olida* (strawberry gum)
- *Lophomyrtus x ralphii* Black Stallion and other varieties
- *Metrosideros carminea* (red rata)
- *Metrosideros collina* (Fiji Christmas bush)
- *Metrosideros excelsa* (New Zealand Christmas bush)
- *Myrtus communis* (common myrtle)
- *Syzygium anisatum* (aniseed myrtle)
- *Syzygium australe* (lilly pilly/scrub cherry)
- *Syzygium paniculatum* (dwarf magenta cherry).

Sentinel sites

Through the Coordination Committee, more than 100 high-risk 'sentinel sites' have now been established to track the spread of myrtle rust in Victoria.

The agencies responsible are regularly monitoring these sites (such as visitor centres or highly susceptible species) and reporting the results to DPI.

The sites are primarily aimed at detecting myrtle rust as early as possible. However, 'negative' results at sentinel sites (i.e. reports that no myrtle rust has been found) are useful in monitoring the spread of the disease in relation to known infected areas.

If your business or agency would like to set up sentinel sites, please email plant.protection@dpi.vic.gov.au

Reporting

Any suspected myrtle rust detection should be reported to DPI by phoning the **Exotic Plant Pest Hotline 1800 084 881 (toll-free)**, or emailing photos of the suspect material, together with a contact phone number and the plant's location, to plant.protection@dpi.vic.gov.au

To avoid spreading the disease, **samples of suspect plants should not be touched, moved or collected.**

Chemical advice

Permits for using certain fungicides to control myrtle rust or decontaminate infected material can be accessed via the DPI website at www.dpi.vic.gov.au/myrtlerust.

Before using one of these fungicides, read the permit together with the product label to determine the applicable directions for use.

It is not necessary to apply for or pay for the use of these permits.

Check www.apvma.gov.au regularly to keep up to date with available permits.

Trade and market access

More than 110 people from 60 businesses have now completed DPI's *Myrtle Rust Authorised Inspection Person Training Course*. This enables them to certify Myrtaceae host material under the Interstate Certification Assurance arrangement *ICA 42* and allows this material to be exported to South Australia and the Northern Territory.

If you would like to attend this course, please contact Nursery and Garden Industry Victoria - phone (03) 9576 0599 or email education@ngiv.com.au

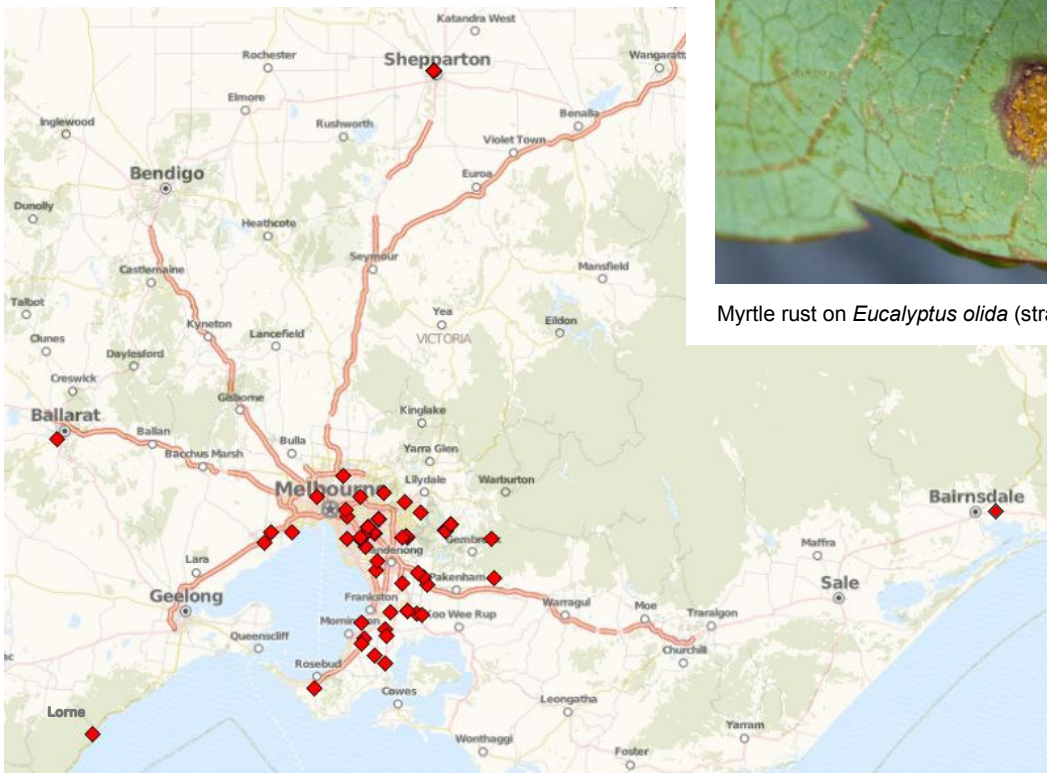
Businesses trading in Myrtaceae plants should adopt the national nursery industry management plan for myrtle rust (www.ngia.com.au) to slow the spread of the disease.

Victoria is maintaining import restrictions on myrtle rust host material from other states where the disease is present. However, this is under review because the distribution of the disease and its detection in public parks indicates it is unlikely to be contained.

Please note that businesses can be penalised \$6,107 for selling plants which they are reasonably expected to know are infected with myrtle rust.



Myrtle rust on *Eucalyptus olida* (strawberry gum)



Map: Distribution of myrtle rust detections in Victoria as of 11 May 2012 (red diamonds)

More information

For more about myrtle rust, visit www.dpi.vic.gov.au/myrtlerust

If you would like to receive this information/publication in an accessible format (such as large print or audio) please call the Customer Service Centre on: 136 186, TTY: 1800 122 969, or email customer.service@dpi.vic.gov.au

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