

# Myrtle Rust

## Plant Survey Protocol



This protocol describes the procedure for the survey of nursery plants for the presence of myrtle rust. The purpose of this survey protocol is to enable the detection of the disease if it is present, or to provide 'evidence of absence' of the disease at the time of inspection.

This procedure is to be undertaken in all nursery's that have a current 'NZPPI Biosecurity Declaration for Myrtle Rust'. The survey is to cover all areas of the nursery and surrounding areas where myrtaceae plants are present.

Surveys may be undertaken as part of other pest and disease monitoring activities, however the plant inspection procedure and the number of plants inspected must be met when inspecting Myrtaceae plants.

This procedure is to be undertaken by either the person responsible for the nursery, or individuals that have been trained in this procedure. Internal training is to be recorded.

### Planning and Preparation



1

Carry a camera and mobile phone



2

Wear disposable gloves



3

Prepare recording sheets, etc.



4

Identify all of the areas in the nursery and surroundings where myrtaceae species are present, noting recent stock movements and including plants in the inwards and dispatch areas

### Crop inspection

- 1) Crop inspections are carried out at intervals of at least 14 days.
- 2) Walk at random through each block or bench area containing Myrtaceae plants\* in a zigzag pattern.
- 3) Visually scan the plants in the block (or bench) for signs of disease, or infection.
- 4) For production and display blocks and benches **less** than 100m<sup>2</sup>, randomly select 3 plants in containers or 5 tube/plug trays per 10m<sup>2</sup> of production or display area.
- 5) For production and display blocks and benches **greater** than 100m<sup>2</sup>, randomly select 5 plants at random per 100m<sup>2</sup> of production or display area blocks and benches.
- 6) For each sampled plant inspect the tops and bottoms of leaves/stems/buds/fruit looking for any evidence of the disease.
- 7) With larger plants, select leaves from all parts of the plant (upper, middle, lower) and examine them individually.

**Note:** Myrtle rust primarily attacks soft, actively growing leaves, shoot tips, flowers and young stems, but also attacks mature leaves of highly susceptible host species, such as *Lophomyrtus* spp.



## Property survey

Periodically (at least fortnightly) survey planted myrtaceous species in the surrounding areas along property boundaries, roads etc.

Pay attention to plants located upwind based on the most common prevailing wind direction of the season.

## Recording results

Records are to be kept for all myrtle rust surveys, including:

- i. date and time of survey
- ii. name(s) of individual(s) completing the survey
- iii. references for each area of the nursery surveyed (e.g. block name / reference)
- iv. record the absence, or presence of myrtle rust in each area (block, or bench) inspected
- v. records may be collected in an electronic or written form, including in a diary, recording sheet, app or site map
- vi. records are to be reviewed by management and kept for a minimum of 12 months.

## Recommendation

- Survey records may also include:
- i. Area of each block (m<sup>2</sup>)
  - ii. Number of plants inspected in each block.

## If you find anything suspicious



Do not touch plants that show symptoms of disease



Do not move any myrtaceae plants from the site.



Take photos of the suspected myrtle rust and the whole plant.



Do not attempt to touch or collect samples as this may increase the spread of this disease.



If possible, isolate the plants with an igloo-hoop-like plastic cover.



Call MPI's exotic pests and diseases hotline on 0800 80 99 66.

## Decontamination

If you are aware (or suspect) that you have been in contact with infected plants, follow the decontamination steps below.



Remove outer clothing and place the garments in a plastic bag and leave it on the spot.



Spray and clean footwear with a disinfectant.



Call MPI - 0800 80 99 66.

\*All references in this document to "Myrtaceous species" exclude feijoa, which MPI no longer considers as host material.

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