

Preventing spread of Myrtle Rust in bushland

Myrtle Rust Local Control Centre, Gosford

Handout prepared for Myrtle Rust response 2010–11

Myrtle Rust is an exotic plant fungal disease that can be spread in bushland containing plants from the Myrtaceae family. Myrtle Rust is spread by people moving infected plant material, dirty equipment including containers and tools, contaminated clothing and vehicles.

Bushland workers such as bushland regenerator groups, bush care groups, Landcare, forestry workers, and National Parks & Wildlife Services staff should take reasonable measures to prevent the spread of Myrtle Rust between and within areas of bushland. Other regular bushland visitors could also apply the following measures.

Prior to bushland visits

Evaluate the risks associated with the activities to be conducted in the bushland, including the risk of introducing and/or spreading Myrtle Rust. Use the reasonable measures detailed in this handout to plan the day's activities.

Where the bushland contains or may contain Myrtaceae plants stricter measures should be in place as the risk is greater.

Measures to prevent spread

Vehicles

Leave vehicles in areas not surrounded by Myrtaceae plants in a designated car park.

Wash vehicles between site visits inside and out.

Personnel

Workers should shower and change into clean clothes (including hats, gloves and footwear) before moving to another site with Myrtaceae plants.

Minimise the amount of personal items you carry as all items (for example, watches, wallets and items in pockets) will need to be cleaned between bushland sites.



Clothing

Launder clothing including hats and work gloves before re-use.

Disposable overalls may be worn over clothing and removed when leaving the site. However, in high risk cases, showering and changing clothes is also recommended.

Protective equipment such as chainsaw chaps and reflective vests also require laundering. Hard hats, visors, protective eyewear, and glasses should be washed in detergent/soap or sprayed with 70% w/v ethanol or methylated spirits. (Read and comply with the manufacturer's MSDS for the chemicals.)

Footwear

Footwear should be appropriate to the task and terrain and be easily cleaned.

Cleaning footwear should start with the removal of gross contamination (soil, mud), followed by disinfection using detergent such as truck wash or spraying the bottom of footwear with 70% w/v ethanol/methylated spirits.

Cleaning should occur when leaving each site.

Equipment/tools

Minimise the number of items brought to the site to reduce opportunity for spread.

Equipment such as secateurs, shovels and chainsaws should be cleaned between sites.

Remove gross contaminants (soil, mud) and clean with a detergent such as truck wash or spray with 70% w/v ethanol or methylated spirits.

Use tools that do not have wooden or cracked handles to aid the cleaning process.

Electronic items such as mobile phones and GPS can be wiped with alcohol wipes. If possible, use the item in a waterproof protector to aid cleaning.

Plant material

Plant waste should be disposed of by burial on site if possible. If this is not possible, dispose of waste so that possible infected material is not spread. Possible methods may be bagging waste and spraying bags with 70% ethanol/methylated spirits before removal. If trailers, trucks or skips are used, secure the load completely; disinfect vehicles on departure and after tipping. Dispose of waste responsibly – not at another bushland site.

Work plans

Organise work to account for measures to prevent spread and allow for decontamination/cleaning requirements. Rosters and equipment resourcing may be affected.

High risk sites may require a pre-operations visit which includes an inspection of Myrtaceae plants for Myrtle Rust.

If Myrtle Rust is suspected, contact the Exotic Plant Pest Hotline on **1800 084 881**. See 'Reporting suspect Myrtle Rust' (below).

Entering the site

Designate and mark safe access point(s) to the site, avoiding Myrtaceae plants where possible, particularly high risk known susceptible hosts.

Have only the necessary people and equipment on site.

Set up a 'wash down' area to enable people to wash their face and hands and clean their footwear when leaving the site.

Where there are multiple sites in an area, limit movement of people and equipment between these sites.

Reporting suspect Myrtle Rust

Stop work and report any plants that are suspected of being infected with Myrtle Rust. Contact the Exotic Plant Pest Hot Line on 1800 084 881.

Provide the following details (where possible):

- name and contact details
- site details – GPS points, access route
- species affected
- approximate number of plants
- number of people on site

Leaving the site

Remove gross contamination from equipment and footwear and disinfect using detergent or 70% ethanol/methylated spirits before leaving the site.

Wash hands, arms and face.

Place all personal rubbish in a bag, seal, disinfect outside of bag before removal from site and dispose of responsibly.

Dispose of detergent from footbaths or other containers from the 'wash down' area in an area where it will be dispersed without impact on the environment. If this is not possible, empty into a waste container and remove from site.

After leaving the site

After leaving the site, do not go near Myrtaceae plants until the following steps are taken:

- Wash the car – inside and out.
- Shower and launder clothes.
- Dispose of any rubbish responsibly.

Further steps:

- Do NOT remove any plant material from site.
- Ensure all personnel and equipment are clean before exiting the site.
- Record contact details of all personnel on site.
- All personnel to shower and change clothes before going to other sites.



Scrub turpentine with Myrtle Rust

Further reading

I&I NSW website for Myrtle Rust which includes:

- [Genera in the Myrtaceae family](#)
- [Identification of Myrtle Rust \(*Uredo rangelii*\)](#)
- [Myrtle Rust – *Uredo rangelii*](#)
- [Photos of myrtle rust](#)

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