

Rust-free Plants

Combine prevention and quick treatment to beat this ugly disease.

WHAT IS RUST?

Rust is a disease caused by any of several different fungi. There are actually several types of rust, most named for the plants they commonly afflict.

All cause light-coloured spots on the surfaces of leaves, which appear as a strange, orange-red powder. As the spots grow, they cover the leaf, eventually causing it to fall off.

HOW DOES RUST SPREAD?

Like most fungi, rust thrives in moist conditions. With most types of rust, the plant must be damp for six to eight hours before the fungus can take hold.

Rain, sprinklers and water spray from a hose are capable of sending the powdery fungi to surrounding plants and leaves. Rust can also be

Tip

Use separate sprayers for fungicides and herbicides. If you use the same sprayer, some of the herbicide may remain in the tank, damaging the plants you are trying to protect. Always triple rinse your sprayer after each use. Rinse over a drain rather than over dirt or grass.



Remove fallen plant debris to prevent the spread of rust

spread through dead plant debris and by the wind.

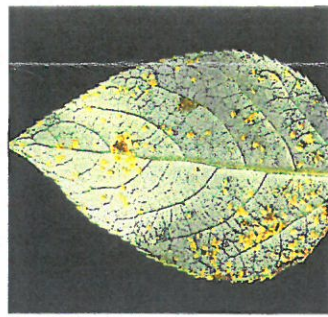
Good hygiene is important in the control of rust. Foliage affected by the disease should never be allowed to fall and rot at ground level, as this will simply aid in the spread of the disease.

HOW TO CONTROL

The first step in eliminating rust from your garden is identifying the type of rust. This is not as hard as it may sound.

In most cases, the type of plant nominates the type of rust. If you need help, place an infected leaf in a plastic bag and have it identified at your local nursery or college of horticulture.

The best way to control rust is to prevent it from entering the garden in the first place. This includes removing infected leaves and practising careful watering. In severe cases, apply a fungicide. The label will list the type of rust it treats and whether it can be used on the plants in your garden.



Signs of rust on a Poplar leaf

FIGHTING RUST: FIVE NATURAL WAYS



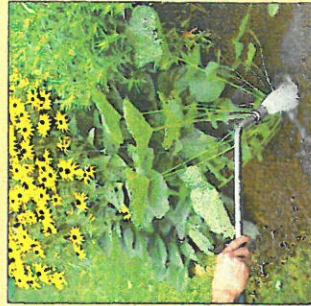
Remove weeds. Excessive weed growth makes them susceptible to rust. Overcrowded conditions increase the humidity, which is another cause of rust.



Quickly remove affected parts. Cut off infected leaves and prune damaged limbs. Clean tools with alcohol before using on another plant.



Remove leaf litter. Clean up around infected plants. This is particularly important in the spring and autumn when strong winds can spread the fungus.



Keep leaves dry. Water plants carefully at soil level, and be sure that your lawn sprinklers do not overspray onto susceptible plants.



Clean rust off the leaves. Use a cloth dampened with alcohol to wipe rust off plant leaves. Be careful not to knock fungus onto uninfected areas.

Caution!

Before you apply fungicides, make sure you follow label directions carefully and check for any special instructions. Keep people and pets away from the area when you are spraying. When you are done, thoroughly clean the sprayer and store it and the chemicals in a safe, cool, dark place.

FIGHTING RUST: SPRAYING FUNGICIDES

YOU WILL NEED: Hose-end sprayer Gloves Fungicide Protective mask



1 Mix fungicide and water according to directions. Fill the hose-end sprayer with this mixture and attach to hose.



2 Spray with a smooth, even stroke. Spray all over the affected plants, making sure to spray under the leaves.



3 Clean the sprayer when you are finished. After it dries, store the sprayer in a locked cabinet.

Rust Favourites

TYPE	PLANT	SYMPTOMS	SOLUTION
TREES & SHRUBS	Rhododendron <i>(left)</i>	Orange spores attach to undersides of leaves; foliage will droop and growth will be arrested	Prune and destroy any leaves and stems affected by rust; examine routinely for signs of re-infestation
	Crabapple	Brown spots appear on leaves in mid-spring and gradually spread until they kill leaves	Remove the Crabapple or nearby Junipers or Cedars; apply fungicide with zinc or sulphur in the spring
FLOWERS	Juniper <i>(left)</i>	Brown growths appear in summer followed by orange spores that may spread to Apples	Destroy the growths as they appear; spray in late summer with a fungicide containing zinc or sulphur
	Pine	Gold lesions appear on needles in spring, and turn to orange powder; uses Asters as host plant	Remove all Asters; spray in summer and autumn with a fungicide containing sulphur or zinc
GROUNDCOVERS	Iris <i>(left)</i>	Small, rust-coloured spots appear in spring; over the growing season, the expanding spots darken	Plant rust-resistant varieties whenever possible; spray infected flowers with a fungicide containing zinc
	Snapdragon	Pale brown spots appear on the undersides of leaves; leaves split open, exposing reddish-brown spores	As soon as you observe rust on the plant, spray Snapdragon with a fungicide that contains sulphur or zinc
	Hollyhock	Orange spots appear in spring on the tops of leaves; disease spreads to the undersides, killing leaves	Spray with a zinc fungicide in early spring when you notice symptoms; remove infected plant parts
	Chrysanthemum <i>(left)</i>	Brown lesions appear on tops of leaves; rust spreads to undersides and stems, eventually killing plant	Quickly remove infected parts; for severe outbreaks, spray with a fungicide containing sulphur
	Rose	Gold-orange spots first appear on the tops of leaves in spring; rust starts on lower leaves and spreads	Destroy infected leaves; spray with fungicide containing sulphur or zinc
GROUNDCOVERS	Grass <i>(left)</i>	Orange, powdery coating and red spores; Zoysiagrass, Kentucky Bluegrass and Ryegrass are most prone	Mow frequently; collect and discard clippings; for severe outbreaks, apply fungicide containing zinc
	Dichondra	Orange spots appear and spread quickly; gradually causes noticeably large areas of dead plants	Remove infected plants; replace with another groundcover that is more resistant to rust

A Basic Guide to Dealing with Rust



There are plenty of ways to keep this nuisance from invading the plants in your garden.

