



Reporting guide

Tackling the spread of myrtle rust

Protecting against biosecurity threats

Australia is constantly threatened by exotic species entering the country, but early detection is the best defence in combatting invasive species. **Myrtle rust is an invasive species of fungus that infects plants in the Myrtaceae family**, including more than 1,500 species of Australian native trees and shrubs like tea trees, bottlebrushes, paperbarks, lily-pillies and eucalypts, as well as non-native Myrtaceae species. [The Atlas of Living Australia \(ALA\)](#) helps to tackle invasive species by making more than 132 million species occurrence records open and accessible. You can help detect myrtle rust in your area and contribute to the ALA through **citizen science**, to track the abundance, spread and impacts of this species across the nation.



How to identify myrtle rust



Bright **yellow spores** are the most visible sign of myrtle rust.



Purple-brown spots on leaves may be a sign of early infection but can have other causes.



Myrtle rust affects new growth. In severe cases, myrtle rust can cause the plant to die back and appear scorched.



Without touching the plant photograph the stem, fruit and flower, and both the top and bottom of affected leaves.



Remember: Myrtle rust spreads easily on hands, clothes, and equipment. Practice correct hygiene and regularly clean gardening and hiking equipment to avoid accidental spread.



Citizen science data collection

Citizen science apps like [iNaturalist](#) and [NatureMapr](#) capture data on Australian invasive species which then feed into the ALA. When uploading your myrtle rust species records, you can include **multiple pictures and helpful information** to better support researchers in understanding myrtle rust spread. Other information to include:

- What are the species of host plant (if known)? Take a picture of the whole plant to help with identification.
- Is the plant young or old? E.g. seedling, sapling, mature, dead or re-sprout after fire damage.
- How affected is the host plant? E.g. A few leaves, one branch, several branches, most of the plant, or the whole plant.
- Are there other affected or unaffected plants at the location? E.g. none, fewer than 10 plants or dense vegetation affected.

