



Office of the Prime Minister's Chief Science Advisor
Kaitohutohu Mātanga Pūtaiao Matua ki te Pirimia

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INFORMATION SHEET: Hot topic – Myrtle Rust

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Notes: 'Hot topic' documents provide an overview of the topic, with links to reputable sources for further information. They are periodically updated. The most recent update is archived here.				



Myrtle rust

Last edited: 24 February 2022

Myrtle rust is an airborne fungal disease that affects and can kill plants of the myrtle family, including taonga species such as mānuka and pōhutukawa. It was first detected in Aotearoa New Zealand in 2017 and has since spread throughout the North Island and into the South Island. We’ve pulled together some accessible summary information about myrtle rust in Aotearoa New Zealand, which you can [read here](#).¹

Combatting myrtle rust together

Using current knowledge and tools, it isn’t possible to completely rid Aotearoa New Zealand of this pathogen. However, a programme of collaborative research is underway to allow us to better understand and combat myrtle rust. Members of the public can contribute to our understanding and management of myrtle rust. Sightings can be recorded on [iNaturalist](#),² and everyone can engage in [practices that reduce the spread of this disease](#)³ like removing infected non-natives from private gardens, reporting sightings in public parks, and cleaning gear after tramping and camping.

Read more

- Biosecurity New Zealand and the Department of Conservation [myrtle rust website](#)⁴
- [Ministry for Primary Industries](#)⁵
- [Department of Conservation](#)⁶
- Biological Heritage National Science Challenge [stocktake of myrtle rust research](#)⁷
- [Science Learning Hub](#)⁸

Endnotes

¹ OPMCSA webpage – Myrtle rust: An invader in New Zealand’s ecosystems, accessed on 24 February 2022 <https://www.pmcsa.ac.nz/topics/emerging-hot-topics/myrtle-rust/>

² iNaturalist webpage – Myrtle Rust Reporter, accessed on 24 February 2022 <https://inaturalist.nz/projects/myrtle-rust-reporter>

³ Manaaki Whenua Landcare Research webpage – Beyond Myrtle Rust Frequently Asked Questions, accessed on 24 February 2022 <https://www.landcareresearch.co.nz/discover-our-research/biosecurity/ecosystem-resilience/beyond-myrtle-rust/faq/>

⁴ Myrtle Rust in New Zealand website, accessed on 24 February 2022 <https://www.myrtlerust.org.nz/>

⁵ Ministry for Primary Industries webpage – Myrtle rust in new Zealand, accessed on 24 February 2022 <https://www.mpi.govt.nz/biosecurity/long-term-biosecurity-management-programmes/myrtle-rust-in-new-zealand/>

⁶ Department of Conservation webpage – Myrtle rust, accessed on 24 February 2022 <https://www.doc.govt.nz/nature/pests-and-threats/diseases/myrtle-rust/>

⁷ Biological Heritage National Science Challenges webpage – Myrtle Rust Science Stocktake, accessed on 24 February 2022 <https://data.bioheritage.nz/dataset/myrtle-rust-science-stocktake>

⁸ Science Learning Hub webpage – Myrtle rust, accessed on 24 February 2022 <https://www.sciencelearn.org.nz/resources/2650-myrtle-rust>