



# Myrtle Rust Information Pack

# What is a myrtle rust?

Myrtle rust is a type of fungal disease that affects plants in the myrtle family. These plants include New Zealand's native pōhutukawa, mānuka, rātā, and some common ornamental garden plants like bottlebrush and lilly pilly.

## How does myrtle rust spread?

The spores of myrtle rust are tiny and can travel through the air, making it easy for the disease to spread from one plant to another. They can also be carried on the wind, insects, birds, or even on people's clothing and gardening tools.

## What does myrtle rust do?

When a plant gets infected with myrtle rust, it can show some signs of being sick.

One of the most noticeable signs is the appearance of orange or yellow powdery spots on the leaves, stems, and even flowers.

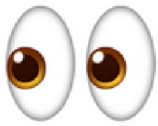
These spots are where the fungal spores are growing. The infected leaves may become twisted, discoloured, or start to die. If not treated, the disease can weaken the plants and even lead to their death.



# What can we do to help?

We can all play a part in protecting plants from myrtle rust.

**Here are a few things you can do:**



## **Be observant.**

Keep an eye out for any signs of myrtle rust on plants, especially those in the myrtle family. If you see something unusual, report it through the iNaturalist app.



## **Hands off!**

Avoid touching plants that might have myrtle rust. The spores can stick to your hands and spread to other plants. It's important to leave it to the experts to handle.



## **Clean gardening tools.**

If you use gardening tools, make sure to clean them thoroughly after use with methylated spirits or bleach.

# Why is it important to protect plants from myrtle rust?

Plants in the myrtle family, like pōhutukawa, mānuka, and rātā, are not only beautiful but also provide important habitats for many creatures.

They are an essential part of our environment!

By protecting them from myrtle rust, we are helping to preserve our natural ecosystems and the biodiversity that relies on these plants. So it's really important to be aware of myrtle rust and take action to prevent its spread. Together we can make a difference in protecting our plants and keeping them healthy for generations to come.

# Your mission.

Use the information you now know about myrtle rust or do some more research on your own and create a piece of artwork.

## Some ideas could include:

- What would happen if we don't protect our native plants from myrtle rust?
- How should we protect our region from myrtle rust (show us how)?
- Why we need to be protectors of Papatūānuku.



You have from **June 26th til July 28th** to complete your artwork.



Express yourself with pens, pencils, paints, whatever you want! Just make sure you can scan it, save it as a PDF or JPEG and send it to us.



Visit our submission webpage on [www.creativechallenge.co.nz](http://www.creativechallenge.co.nz) where you can fill out our entry, upload your work and vote for your favourite!



**You want the most votes, don't you?** Share your entry with your family and friends and get them to vote for you!

## You could be in to win...

Win big with our **\$2,000 prize pool!** Picture your artwork proudly displayed on billboards across the Bay of Plenty, score yourself a family pass to some of the best local attractions, or win one of our spot prizes – Frank Green water bottles, Crocs, vouchers and more are all up for grabs!

**Unleash your inner biosecurity hero and show us what you know about myrtle rust's impact on our environment.**

