



DAFF 10/004D

4 May 2010

Myrtle rust (*Uredo rangelii*) detection

A National Management Group met on 30 April 2010 to consider a recent detection of *Uredo rangelii* (Myrtle rust) at a NSW cut flower growing facility.

This is the first detection of Myrtle rust in Australia and there is limited knowledge of its impact or behaviour under Australian conditions.

Based on the advice of the Consultative Committee on Emergency Plant Pests—a coordinating body providing technical advice during plant health emergencies—the National Management Group has agreed that the rust is not technically feasible to eradicate.

The National Biosecurity Committee will oversee continued surveillance and host testing in order to assess the implications of Myrtle rust and develop options for its management.

In this incident, Myrtle rust has been found on *Agonis flexuosa* (willow myrtle), *Syncarpia* (turpentine) and *Callistemon* (bottlebrush) species. The full host range of Myrtle rust will be the subject of ongoing analysis. To date, it has not been confirmed on Australian eucalypts.

Myrtle rust is closely related to the rust fungus causing guava rust and part of a complex of rusts that infect the Myrtaceae family of plants, which include many Australian native species. Myrtle rust produces lesions on young, actively growing leaves and shoots as well as on fruits and sepals. Leaves may become buckled or twisted as a result of infection. On turpentine and callistemon, rust lesions are purple in colour, with masses of bright yellow or orange-yellow spores.

Rusts are highly transportable. Their spores can be spread via contaminated clothing, infected plant material, on equipment and by insect movement and wind dispersal. These types of rust affect commercial plant growing operations and native ecosystems. They typically attack young plants and new growth on established plants and can be controlled in commercial operations with the use of fungicides.

The National Management Group is comprised of the chief executive officers of the national and state/territory departments of agriculture and primary industries across Australia and also representatives of peak industry bodies. The National Biosecurity Committee is comprised of senior representatives of the national and state/territory environment and primary industries departments.

National Management Groups and the National Biosecurity Committee are chaired by the Secretary of the Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Dr Conall O'Connell.

Media inquiries: 02 6272 3232