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Fuchsia Rust

Fuchsia rust is not something we see too often, but a couple of cases have been seen in greenhouses this spring. Learn what to look for and some tips on how to manage.

Fuchsia rust is caused by the fungus *Pucciniastrum epilobii*. At first, the disease typically causes leaf spots and/or patches which first appear pale or discolored, they may then turn tan, occasionally with a purple-colored border. Spots are followed by the colorful yellow-orange sporulation of the fungus on the under and/or upper leaf surfaces.



Fuchsia rust, caused by *Pucciniastrum epilobii*. (Photo: Margery Daughtrey)

In severe cases, leaf drop may occur. In the samples seen this spring leaf spots were not particularly conspicuous, though lots of sporulation was observed.

While problematic and unsightly for your fuchsias, you don't need to worry about this fungus spreading to other annuals in the greenhouse – rusts are very host specific. *P. epilobii* infects fuchsia and fireweed (*Epilobium*), with true fir (*Abies*) as an alternate host.

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If you see fuchsia rust, carefully discard plants and leaves to avoid spreading spores (bag them before carrying through the greenhouse). Follow with fungicides to protect healthy fuchsia from infection. A number of fungicides are labeled for rust, make sure to rotate between modes of action or fungicide groups. Using a systemic fungicide is a good place to start, then rotate with a different fungicide group.

Azoxystrobin (e.g., Heritage), mancozeb (e.g., Protect), and Group 3 fungicides such as myclobutanil (e.g., Eagle) and triflumazole (e.g., Terraguard) are commonly recommended. Pay attention to any local restrictions for use of specific fungicides as well as all label recommendations. You don't often see fuchsia specifically listed as a crop that was tested for safety on a fungicide label; to be cautious you should test a small number of plants first and evaluate for phytotoxicity before treating large numbers.

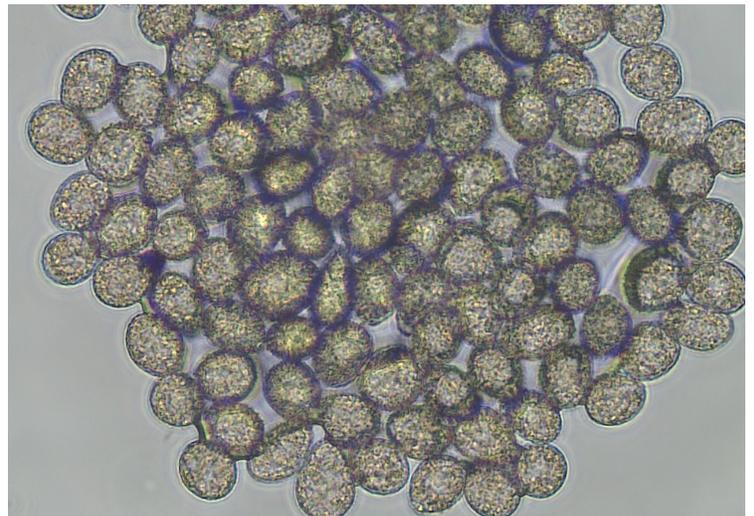
Practices such as ensuring good air circulation, limiting leaf wetness, and keeping humidity and condensation low can help prevent spread and new infections. Where feasible, removing fireweed and true fir in the near vicinity of the greenhouse may help to eliminate potential inoculum sources.



Rust sporulation on leaf undersides and surfaces. (Photo: Lynn Bliven, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Allegheny County)



An example of a leaf spot symptom, caused by fuchsia rust. (Photos: Ron Jones, North Carolina State University, Bugwood.org)



Urediospores of the fungus *Pucciniastrum epilobii*. (Photo: Margery Daughtrey)

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