

European Pear Rust



European Pear Rust is relatively new to this country and is caused by the rust fungus *Gymnosporangium sabiniae* which attacks both pear and junipers and is apparent on pears by the appearance of large bright coloured spots on the surface of the leaves.

Both pear and juniper are needed in order that the infection continue each year. The pathogen is passed to the juniper via spores that are released from fungal mounds that build up on the underside of pear leaves corresponding to the spots on the surface. These spores carry via wind and rain splash to infect the juniper causing perennial cankers on the stems. The disease then over-winters on the juniper which in turn releases its spores from the cankers in spring to re-infect the pear and so the cycle continues.

DAMAGE

The first signs appear on the upper surface of the leaf and consist of small brown spots, which gradually develop into larger bright orange/red spots measuring up to 1cm in size during the summer and early autumn. These are roughly spherical in shape with a dark brown centre. On the underside of the leaf as the fungus grows, raised, dark brown, lumpy mounds appear from which spores are emitted. Occasionally the disease can cause damaging sunken cankers on the stems of the tree, but the fruit is rarely affected.

CONTROL

Non Chemical Control

Be vigilant and check pear trees regularly, removing and destroying any leaves that are infected as soon as they are noticed. This should help reduce the number of spores spreading the disease.

In order to break the cycle of infection, prune out any rust infected juniper stems or better still remove the plants if they are growing in your garden. This method will reduce the chances of re-infection however it is not full proof as spores can travel several miles by wind.

Prune out any cankers that appear on the stems, sterilizing tools both before and after use by either immersing the blades in boiling water for 5-10 minutes or alternatively rubbing them with a cloth soaked in methylated spirit.

Chemical Control

There are no fungicides available to the amateur gardener against this disease

USE CHEMICALS SAFELY: ALWAYS READ THE LABEL

When using chemicals it is most important to follow the manufacturer's instructions precisely. Only use on the fruits that are listed on the manufacturer's label. An accurate weighting machine and measuring cylinder should be obtained. Chemicals can be wasted by making concentrations unnecessarily strong or by making them too weak and ineffective. Furthermore, if chemicals are too strong they may cause some damage to the foliage.