

MYRTLE RUST

in New Zealand

Resource for gardeners

Caring for your myrtle plants

Avoid heavy pruning during warm weather if possible as this could encourage susceptible new growth. Instead, prune myrtles only in late autumn and early winter. When pruning, use good hygiene practice, sterilise and disinfect tools and equipment with pure alcohol or methylated spirits.



Reduce soil compaction and injury to tree roots

Reduce or avoid applying any herbicides around trees, trunk or root plate areas. Read the product label, as care is needed with some grass care products which can contain selective herbicides that impact on garden plants and their growth patterns. Avoid lawn care or weed control products around the dripline of a tree. Tree roots do not like soil compaction and this can reduce tree health by stopping water absorbing into the soil, reducing oxygen in the soil as well as physically damaging the roots of trees which can allow the entry of diseases. Consider selecting low clumping or bulb type plant varieties if planting under established trees.

Use Mulch

The use of wood chip mulch could help improve the soil around trees as it helps plant establishment and growth. It helps keep water in the soil, keeps soil cooler, and produces a better habitat for soil microorganisms. Wood mulch is often free from arboriculture companies. Keep mulch away from the stem or trunk, but you can pile it up to 20cm deep. Replenish mulch as it breaks down (faster in some seasons than others). Homemade compost is also a good top-dressing for around trees and plants. Practice good hygiene



Apply Fertiliser

Only use fertiliser on garden or plantation trees. Wild natural trees or stands of vegetation should not be fertilised. Natural products such as fish meal, blood and bone or sheep pellets will support soil microorganisms as well as the plants. Seaweed based fertilisers can also be used, and the use of products with humic acid, and trace minerals can help with soil health and root development. Products with phosphorous and potassium can help with root and shoot development.