

Fuchsia Tips on Rust
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A number of members reported that they are having rust problems this year. I've attached some info on control. In brief:

1. Isolate the plant from healthy ones.
2. Remove all affected leaves-there is no cure-even if it means defoliating the entire plant.
3. Spray with organic fungicide, such as neem oil, baking soda/oil mix, or any of the many commercial organic fungicides available in garden stores.
4. Repeat this spray about twice weekly (read label on what you're using for specifics).
5. Water your plants in the morning and concentrate the water at soil level, rather than wetting the leaves.
6. Fertilize lightly. Frequent diluted feedings are better than a few strong doses. Kelp is a great alternative to fertilizer that helps promote a strong plant that resists disease (Maxicrop is a common brand).
6. Consider moving your plants to a sunnier location. As long as we're continuing to have cooler than usual, overcast weather, fuchsias will be fine in full sun.

Rust Fungus Identification:

Often the first sign of rust is a single brown spot on the upper side of the leaf. Look underneath and you'll see tiny orange rust-colored bumps. Affected plants can have dozens of rust spots on each leaf, and it's possible for a single leaf to have more than a hundred rust spots. These are spores of the fungus. Fuchsia rust is highly contagious to other fuchsias, but not necessarily other plants, as there are different strains of rust that attack different plants.

Damage Caused by Plant Rust Fungus:

Flowers with a heavy rust infestation may experience curling or withering of leaves, and the plant can lose its leaves entirely. With this much damage to leaves, gardeners can expect to see stunted growth in their garden plants.

Organic Sprays for Rust Control:

A weekly dusting of sulfur can prevent and treat garden rust disease. Neem oil, a botanical fungicide and pesticide, also helps controls rust. Some organic gardeners swear by baking soda for garden fungus control. The efficacy of baking soda spray may be enhanced by mixing it with light horticultural oil.

Cultural Control of Rust Fungus:

Rust fungi, like many plants' fungal diseases, flourish in wet conditions. The most important step you can take to reduce rust in your flower garden is to stop overhead watering. Instead, use a drip irrigation system to deliver water at ground level. If this isn't possible, water your flower garden early in the morning, so the sun's rays will quickly dry your flowers and foliage.

Practicing good garden hygiene can decrease rust attacks. If you see signs of rust, remove, and destroy the affected foliage to prevent the spores from spreading to new growth. Do not compost diseased foliage.

Here are some recipes for home-made fungicides:

<http://homeguides.sfgate.com/homemade-spray-control-rust-plants-32703.html>

