

Rust Disease and Invasive Species
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The last few years, ornamental pear tree leaves have been infected with a rust disease that caused numerous orange spots on their leaves. This disease is cedar-hawthorn rust and on ornamental pear it mostly detracts from the plants appearance but does not harm the tree.

Like most rust diseases, cedar-hawthorn rust requires two host plants to complete its life cycle. The disease begins in spring when spores are released from galls growing on cedars or other Junipers. The galls look like blobs of orange gelatin when releasing spores. These galls are harmless to cedars.

When released spores are blown onto ornamental pear leaves, and there is moisture on leaf surfaces for a long enough period of time, the fungus can infect the leaves. Symptoms develop from late may into July as bright reddish-orange spot on upper leaf surfaces. Spores released from leaf spots cause cedar galls.

This disease is almost identical to cedar-apple rust. The only difference is the fungus is slightly different and will only infect apple or crabapples trees. For apples and crabapples, the most important means of control is planting resistant cultivars. For susceptible cultivars, fungicide control would be the same as listed below.

While there may be resistant ornamental pears available, this tree is now on the Nebraska invasive species list and no longer recommended for planting. Established trees are not required to be removed, but new ornamental pears should no longer be planted.

On ornamental pear, control is not needed or recommended. For tree owners who choose to reduce rusty spots on these trees for aesthetic reasons, the time to apply fungicides is just as leaf buds begin to swell in spring.

This is during the active infection period and the only time fungicides will work. If one waits until orange spots appear on leaves, it is much too late to apply a fungicide. If applied at this time, it would be a waste of money and an unnecessary pesticide application.

If applied at the correct time in spring, a good fungicide to use is myclobutanil. Other labeled fungicides, such as mancozeb, will also reduce infections of rust disease on ornamental pear. Follow all label directions for application. When applying to apple trees, be sure the fungicide is labeled for use on edible fruit trees.

And again, keep in mind ornamental pear is on the Nebraska Invasive Species list and should no longer be planted. When it comes to weeds, we use the terms noxious and invasive. This may raise a question about the difference between the two.

All noxious weeds are invasive, but not all invasive plants are noxious. Noxious is a legal term and requires landowners to control the weed on their property to prevent spread. For a weed to be listed as noxious, the plant goes through an extensive review and only the most aggressive and destructive plants make the Noxious Weed list.

Invasive plants are plants that are not native to an area and are capable of causing damage if they become established. But not all non-native plants are harmful. The term invasive is for the most aggressive non-native species and a plant may be considered invasive in one state but a good plant in another state.

Be aware of invasive plants to avoid buying and planting them. For a listing of Nebraska invasive plants and plants on a watch list, go to <https://neinvasives.com/> .