

Daylily Rust Update

Keith Mickler

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Daylilies are among the most popular flowering perennials grown in Georgia and Florida. They are easy to grow, low in maintenance requirements, and they have a lengthy blooming period. During late spring and early summer they brighten up our flower beds, roadsides and mailbox areas with their trumpet-shaped flowers of color and beauty.

Daylilies are available in an unlimited number of flower colors and shapes and are even considered to be relatively pest free. But like the saying goes "All Good Things Will Eventually Come to an End."

This is exactly what has happened to our pest-free daylily. About two years ago a disease called daylily rust made its ugly presence known to us gardeners. I have written about this daylily tragedy before but I feel compelled to give you an update on this situation.

Daylily rust has been confirmed as *Puccinia hemerocallidis*. That is just the fancy name for this menace to our beloved daylily. Daylily rust causes raised yellow-orange to rusty brown pustules on the underside of the leaf. On the more susceptible varieties the entire affected leaf dies, while in more resistant varieties the lesion may be no more than a fleck.

The word about daylily rust is traveling fast among our gardeners who favor this plant. Naturally, they are unhappy to be experiencing problems with a plant that has been almost trouble-free in the past. However, we do have some knowledge of the disease and ways to work toward controlling it.



The disease is spread by airborne spores and through the movement of plants. Following the inoculation of leaves, infection occurs within two to three days. This disease spreads quickly once present.

Control of daylily rust disease will require a combination of sanitation and the regular application of approved fungicides. First, remove and destroy infected foliage from plants. Be thorough, because if any infected leaves are left on plants, even one spot on one leaf, they will continue to be a source of infection by producing spores. It is probably best just to cut infected lilies to the ground and then spray new foliage as it emerges.

Fungicides for the control of daylily rust must be selected carefully. There are two categories of recommended fungicides. Applications should be rotated so that you're applying a fungicide from one category one week, then making an application of fungicide from the other category next time. Make fungicide applications on a 7 to 14 day schedule.

Category 1 includes fungicides with the following active ingredients and trade names:

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- Propiconazole (Spectracide Immunex or Banner Maxx),
- Azoxystrobin (Hertiage), Flutolanil (Contrast)
- Myclobutanil (Spectracide Immunox or Systhane).

Category 2 includes

- Chlorothalonil (Daconil 2787)
- Mancozeb.

Finding a fungicide from each category might require some extra effort and dollars. Get with your fellow gardeners and share the supplies and cost. When searching for these fungicides at the local garden center, check the active ingredient on the label. The product name on the front of the container might be something generic such as "All Purpose Fungicide" or "Lawn and Ornamental" fungicide, yet contain one of the products listed above.

More detailed information is available from several sources. These sites provide a lists of varieties and their relative susceptibility to daylily rust. Web users go to:

<http://www.aphis.usda.gov/npb/daylily.html>

<http://doacs.state.fl.us/~pi/enpp/pathology/daylily-rust.html>

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