

PLANT DISEASE CONTROL NOTES

EXTENSION DIVISION • VIRGINIA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE AND STATE UNIVERSITY

ORNAMENTAL AND FLOWER DISEASES

AZALEA LEAF AND FLOWER GALL

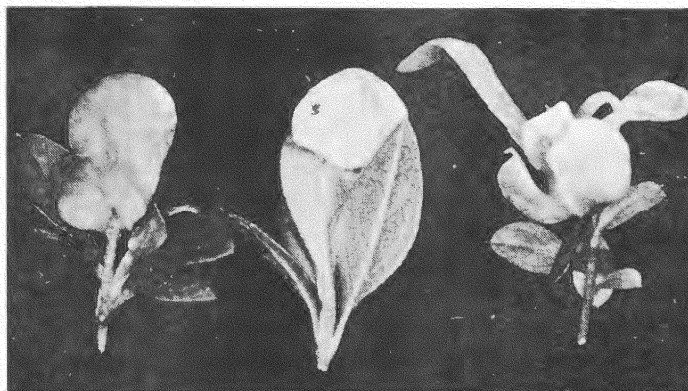
Control Series 119

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Although the disease is more alarming than damaging, the fungus *Exobasidium vaccinii* causes concern to many Virginia home gardeners each year. Under very humid conditions, as may occur under glass, the galls may become so abundant as to cause considerable harm to nursery plants if control measures are not implemented. Closely related species of the fungus *Exobasidium* cause the same type of gall formation on plants such as Arbutus, Blueberry, Camellia, Ledum, Leucothoe and Rhododendron.

SYMPTOMS: The disease causes the leaves to become swollen, curled, and fleshy. They are pale green to white or pink in color during the early stages of the disease, and turn brown and hard as the season progresses. Infected flowers are fleshy, waxy, and swollen. These galls are made up of abnormal tissue. Lower leaves on plants are usually the most seriously damaged portion, but under humid conditions and in shaded locations, galls may occur at the ends of top branches. Flowers of other plants are also frequently affected, especially the petals of evergreen species of rhododendron. The galls which are formed from the swollen, distorted tissue become covered with a whitish mold-like growth during periods of high humidity.



Azalea Leaf Gall

DISEASE CYCLE: The occurrence and intensity of the disease is dependent upon weather conditions and upon a source of the causal fungus. Spores produced in the whitish mold on the surface of the galls blow and are washed to leaf and flower buds causing infections.

CONTROL: Where only a few plants are involved, as in a home planting, or a small greenhouse area, the disease is controlled by picking the galls and burning them. Refer to Pest Management Guide 7 for information on chemical control.

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KEYS TO PROPER USE OF PESTICIDES

1. Read the label on each pesticide container before each use. Follow instructions to the letter; heed all cautions and warnings, and note precautions about residues.
2. Keep pesticides in the containers in which you bought them. Put them where children or animals cannot get to them, preferably under lock and away from food, feed, seed, or other material that may become harmful if contaminated.
3. Dispose of empty containers in the manner specified on the label.

SEE YOUR DOCTOR IF SYMPTOMS OF ILLNESS OCCUR DURING OR AFTER USE OF PESTICIDES