

# PEAR RUST FUNGUS

This fungus is similar to Cedar Apple Rust on flowering crabs and fruit producing apple trees, in which the fungus needs to two hosts to complete its life cycle. Junipers & Cedars host the galls, while pears, apples, crabapples, and hawthorns host the fungal on their leaves.

Trying to control the disease by treating the junipers is not practical, as there are so many in landscape plantings, and growing wild throughout Nebraska.

The first sign of pear rust fungus are the small, bright orange leaf spots on the surface of the pear tree leaf. A closer inspection will reveal typical rust fungal growths on the underside of the leaves. These rust fungus leaf spots house the spores which are easily spread by wind and splashing rain to the junipers and cedars, where the gall is formed, and it stays for the winter. In the spring following periods of high humidity and rainfall, the hard fungus growths on the cedar or evergreen enlarge into orange, horn-like outgrowths that produce airborne spores that attach to the immature flowering pear leaves.

The infection will not, by itself, kill a pear tree. It will however weaken the tree for the current and following year.

Any newly installed pear tree or any tree under stress from over watering, growing in heavy compacted clay soils, mechanical or winter injury, storm damaged, or stressed from weather conditions are more likely to be affected by this fungus.

You can apply a preventative fungicide *Fertilome Liquid Systemic Fungicide* or *F-Stop* to lower the risk of infection. Start spraying when you see the galls pushing out the orange horns, or when crabapples start flowering, and repeat every 14 days. If we are having cool, rainy weather, then apply every 7-10 days.

## Top & bottom sides of infected pear leaf:



## Juniper gall and its horn-like tentacles:



The gall can sense rainfall, and that's when it will push out the bright orange horns. Rain splashing on these horns disperses the spores that then affect pears, apples, crabs, and hawthorns.

