

Rust detected on eggplant (*Solanum melongena*) in Southwest Florida

Pamela D. Roberts, Katherine Hendricks, and Mark Verbeck

3/3/2012

Lesions were detected on the top of eggplant leaves that were roughly circular, with a yellow halo and a dark center (Fig. 1). Lesions on the undersides of the leaves were similar except they were a bit smaller and contained pustule, cup-like structure with erupting yellow to orange spores (Fig. 2). Microscopic examination revealed that the individual structures (aecia) contained spores (aeciospores) (Fig. 3). Spores were red-orange in color and round to ovoid (Fig. 4). A rust disease caused by *Puccinia* sp. was described on eggplant in Georgia in 1997. Eggplant was the aecial host for the rust pathogen of pearl millet (*Pennisetum glaucum*). We suspect this is the same rust and will follow with additional testing.

In this outbreak, nearly every eggplant in a 10 acre field was affected. Plants are mature and have been harvested 2 to 3 times. No symptoms occurred on fruit.



Figure 1. Rust lesions on top of eggplant leaves



Figure 2. Rust lesions on bottom of eggplant leaves



Figure 3. Close up of rust lesions on bottom of eggplant leaves

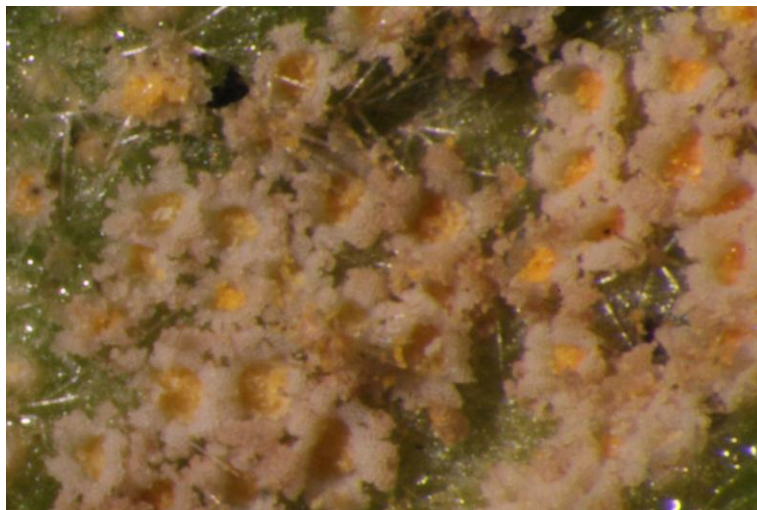


Figure 4. Cup-like structures (aecia) containing chains of spores (aeciospores)