

Puccinia chondrillina

Rush Skeletonweed Rust Fungus

Weed(s) Attacked: Rush Skeletonweed
SCNWCB February 2006

GENEALOGY

Original sources for U.S. release was Italy. First U.S. releases made in 1977. Established in the Pacific Northwest, including Idaho, Oregon, and Washington. Established in Stevens County.

LIFE CYCLE

The fungus forms infective spores within brownish pustules (uredia) on all above ground parts of the plant. These infective spores are released from the pustules from spring to fall to continue infection. Lesions (telia) at the base of flowering shoots are another source of rust spores. The overwintering stage is composed of dormant spores. In the spring the overwintered spores germinate on rosette leaves, which ultimately leads to the production of rust pustules (uredia) on all plant parts, and lesions (telia) at the base of the flowering shoots.

EFFECT

The pustules (uredia) and the lesions (telia) are destructive. Infected seedlings may be killed outright. Maturing plants have reduced vigor, reduced photosynthetic surfaces, reduced root vigor, and their ability to form viable seeds is hampered. Effects of the rust on Rush Skeletonweed is diminished at hot and dry sites.

REDISTRIBUTION

Infected rosettes can be collected and placed among uninfected plants during the spring and fall. During the summer collect rusted plants and bind them into "Teepees". Wedge these bundles into plants that are not infected. Cooler weather, evening releases, and high humidity helps the chances for establishment.

COMMENTS

This was the first plant pathogen released for the control of a noxious weed in North America.

