

If you have Catclaw Acacia trees, you may notice strange brown clusters appear. This is Catclaw rust, and it's a fungus that infects the terminal ends of Acacia branches and causes a distorted, bunched growth. The growth produces spores on the tree's leaves in late spring or summer. Catclaw rust thrives if temperatures are relatively cool and humidity is high. So, a monsoon season with high humidity levels that linger into summer can create the ideal conditions for this fungus to proliferate.



Is There a Treatment for Catclaw Rust?

According to experts at the University of Arizona Cooperative Extension, there is no known practical or effective treatment for Catclaw rust. This fungus is a normal occurrence in nature and acts as a natural population control for Acacia trees. Typically, it has a two year life cycle from the start of each new spore growth.

If you see Catclaw rust on your Acacia tree in the spring or summer, wait to prune the infected branches. Pruning during the tree's growing season could weaken it further, as you are leaving an open wound on the tree that must heal. In addition, you risk spreading the fungal spores further on your pruners or via wind currents.

What Can I Do?

You'll want to wait to remove these ugly clusters and any infected branches once the tree enters its dormancy period, roughly December through the end of February. Here are some guidelines for removing the fungus most effectively:

- Cut off infected branches from the union of two branches, and only when the tree is dormant.
- Do not cut in the middle of the branch, or the fungus is likely to grow back. Make sure you remove it completely.
- Remember that it takes two years for the fungus to "run its course" from new spore growth. Any clusters that appear next spring can take another 2 years to dissipate.
- If a tree is completely infested, it's best to remove that tree from the landscape.
- Continue to monitor your Acacia trees. With time, most trees (unless heavily infested), can recover from Catclaw rust.

Source:

University of Arizona Cooperative Extension

extension.arizona.edu/sites/extension.arizona.edu/files/attachment/RustDiseases_0.pdf

