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AUSTRALIA'S floral emblem is under threat from a variety of plant-killing diseases incubating overseas, scientists say.

These diseases are evolving in plantations growing Australian wattles overseas, the Invasive Species Council (ISC) said in a statement today.

The warning follows the Federal Government's inability to deal with the recent outbreak of Myrtle rust, a deadly-plant killing disease that has already invaded NSW, Queensland and parts of Victoria.

Myrtle rust was detected in Victoria in January this year, having taken less than two years to colonise the rest of the east coast of mainland Australia.

"It may prove to be one of the most calamitous environmental pests of the century," said John DeJose, CEO of the ISC said.

Myrtle rust, which produces masses of powdery yellow or orange spores, has evolved the ability to infect tea tree, bottlebrush and eucalypt species.

If the overseas disease threat eventuates it could cause cause serious damage to Australia's golden wattles, Mr DeJose said.

Mr DeJose called on the Federal Government to develop a contingency plan for invasive plant pathogens such as myrtle rust.

"Our ecosystem health is already in decline, largely due to the impacts of invasive species, one of the top three threats to nature in Australia," Mr DeJose said.

"Profound changes to the plant mix in an ecosystem can cause big problems for a range of animal species that depend on them for survival."

Myrtle rust attacks the gum family of plants, or Myrtaceae, which include about 2500 species.

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