

# Leaf and Flower Gall

Disease Profile

Arkansas Gardener - June

By: Stephen Vann

---

Leaf and flower gall can be a troublesome, although not serious, problem for azalea and camellia in the Southern growing region. This disfiguring disease is caused by the fungus *Exobasidium vaccinii*.

The most obvious indication of the disease is the development of green fleshy swellings, or thickenings of plant tissues, on leaves or flowers. The fungus stimulates abnormal plant cell divisions, causing the formation of the swellings or galls of various sizes and shapes. The galls often retain their green or pink color, but more often become covered with the white growth of the fungus. Spores produced by the fungus over-winter on buds and initiate infections the following spring during bud break. High humidity and wet leaves provide an ideal environment for infections to occur. Young leaves tend to be most susceptible and most galls tend to develop on lower leaves.

Sanitation is the best method of control. Pick off and destroy newly forming galls before they become white. Prune shrubs to increase aeration and minimize leaf wetness periods.

**BYLINE:** Stephen Vann is an associate professor and Extension urban plant pathologist with the University of Arkansas, Cooperative Extension Service.