

# What's Up Doc?

Steve Reynolds highlights one of the more unusual questions during last year's Plant Hunters' Fairs plant problem clinics.



## Question :

A number of my trees, shrubs, pea sticks and currant stems are covered in pink cushion-like spots. Am I seeing things ? Is there any cure and how should I dispose of them ?

## Answer :

First the good news, there's nothing wrong with your eyesight ! This is a particularly destructive fungus which relishes the damp conditions we've experienced recently. Related to cankers, Coral Spot (*Nectria cinnabarina*) is to be found on dead wood of many plants – Acers, currants, fig trees and magnolias, amongst others, are especially susceptible. The most obvious symptoms are the raised spore-filled pustules on the bark which are often a rich coral pink or red colour. Spores are spread around via water splash. Adopt good garden hygiene by collecting all diseased wood which should then be burned or put in the green wheelie bins so that the high temperatures at the Council refuse tip can destroy the fungus and its spores. In recent years (perhaps aided by greater use of wood chip mulches) it has spread and can become parasitic attacking living wood, rather than adopting its usual saprophytic dead wood mode. The diseased tissue is cankered and sunken, often appearing a dull greenish colour beneath the bark. If the disease is on shoots dying back then prune back to at least 3-4" (7-10cm in new money!) into healthy wood.

Photo by Lairich Rig

