Cooler weather signals various things in the world of floriculture - for mum growers it signals that it is time to think about chrysanthemum white rust (CWR) caused by the fungus *Puccinia horiana*. CWR infection results in small, round, light yellow/light green spots (3-5mm in diameter) on the upper leaf surface, with corresponding swellings and spore pustules that are white, pink, tan, or buff in color on the leaf underside. Symptoms are usually first seen in cool and wet weather in August, September or October. CWR is typically more of a concern in the Northeast, Mid-Atlantic, and Western states.

While having a rust mar your plants is worrisome enough, CWR is an increased concern due to its current status as a federally regulated disease. If CWR is found, it is necessary to notify your local regulatory agency and follow a federal protocol, which includes destroying...
In cooperation with our local and state greenhouse organizations
that occurs on mums, chrysanthemum brown rust (CBR). Like CWR, CBR causes small yellow spots on leaves, but, unlike CWR, the spore pustules on the leaf undersides will be chocolate brown in color once they are mature. CBR is not federally regulated, but it is nonetheless important to scout for and to manage, since it can result in rather unattractive and unsalable plants. For both rusts, cultural management strategies include proper plant spacing and careful irrigation practices aimed at reducing the amount of time that the foliage is wet. If CBR-infected plants are noticed in the landscape, removing the plants will remove a source of inoculum for the next season. Like CWR, CBR will thrive in cool and wet conditions, so be especially watchful when these occur. When needed, apply a rotation of fungicides with different modes of action; fungicides effective against the relatively common brown rust will also work for white rust protection.

Chrysanthemum Brown Rust on upper and lower leaf surface. 
(Photos: Nora Catlin)