



LAWN DISEASE

Identification Guide

This guide has been specially crafted for YOU, our lawn care customer, as an aid to help you identify Lawn Diseases that occur in Cool Season Turfgrass. We understand that when brown spots appear, homeowners often mistakenly attribute lawn issues to either their actions or ours. In fact, most reported brown spots during hot, humid summer months are actually lawn disease. As your dedicated lawn care partner, we aim to provide you with the necessary information and support to effectively manage lawn diseases.

WHAT'S INCLUDED: In the guide you will find 9 examples of the most common lawn diseases. There are over 40 different fungal and bacterial lawn diseases that affect Cool Season Turfgrass! The guide includes pictures showcasing real instances of fungal lawn disease and helpful information about each one so that you can identify the signs of discoloration, wilting, thinning, patches, and fungal growth that are the hallmarks of lawn disease. By recognizing these symptoms early on, you can take proactive steps to manage and mitigate the impact of lawn diseases.

Acting swiftly is crucial in addressing lawn diseases. You will also learn how to fine-tune your cultural practices—such as proper mowing, watering, and fertilization techniques—which promote a robust and disease-resistant lawn.

We want to assure you that lawn diseases are not indicative of any negligence but are natural occurrences beyond anyone's control. By partnering with us and following the strategies outlined in this guide, along with favourable weather, we will overcome these diseases together. Let's work hand in hand to ensure the health and vitality of your lawn, creating a beautiful and sustainable environment for you and your family to enjoy.



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Please Note: This is not a comprehensive list of lawn diseases



Fusarium Blight "Summer Patch"



Identification

- * Fungal disease caused by Magnaporthiopsis poae
- * Circular, crescent, or streaky patches
- * Affected areas change colour in hot weather from light green to reddish brown, to tan, finally to straw-coloured
- * Most noticeable in moist areas
- * Can be randomly dispersed in the lawn

Time of Year

- * Typically, June - August
- * During hot, humid temps between 24°C - 32°C
- * Spore production begins above 21°C
- * Affected grass may die 4-7 days after first symptoms appear

Treatment

- * Lightly rake out to increase air circulation and allow for new growth
- * Maintain at 2 3/4" - 3"
- * Water and mow in the a.m.
- * Fertilize regularly
- * Collect lawn clippings to reduce thatch build-up
- * Sharpen mower blades
- * Water deeply, less often
- * Aerate annually and overseed thin areas

Dollar Spot



Identification

- * Fungal disease caused by the fungus Clarireedia jacksonii (formerly Sclerotinia homoeocarpa)
- * Straw-coloured patches 1"-3" in diameter
- * Hourglass-shaped lesions on grass blades, darker brown at margins

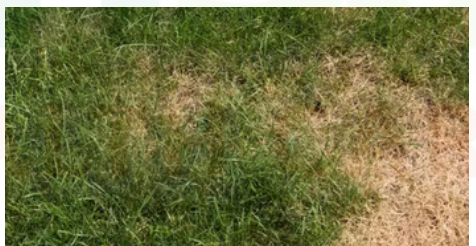
Time of Year

- * Spring through fall
- * Most active when daytime temps are warm & moist, followed by cool nights between 15°C to 32°C

Treatment

- * Lightly rake out to increase air circulation and allow for new growth
- * Maintain at 2 3/4" - 3"
- * Water and mow in the a.m.
- * Fertilize regularly
- * Collect lawn clippings to reduce thatch build-up
- * Sharpen mower blades
- * Water deeply, less often
- * Aerate annually and overseed thin areas

Rhizoctonia Blight "Brown Patch"



Identification

- * Fungal disease caused by Rhizoctonia Solani
- * Leaf blades have similar lesions to dollar spot, but not as bleached
- * Circular patches a few inches to several feet
- * "Smoky" border can appear after morning dew

Time of Year

- * More than 10hrs leaf wetness per day for several days
- * Night temps under 16°C for cool-season grasses
- * Most severe in areas of low mowing height

Treatment

- * Lightly rake out to increase air circulation and allow for new growth
- * Maintain at 2 3/4" - 3"
- * Water and mow in the a.m.
- * Fertilize regularly
- * Collect lawn clippings to reduce thatch build-up
- * Sharpen mower blades
- * Water deeply, less often
- * Aerate annually and overseed thin areas



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'Ascochyta' Leaf Blight



Identification

- *Fungal disease caused by Ascochyta
- *Quickly appearing straw colored patches in a variety of shapes and sizes
- Tapered tips of grass blades may or may not have a dancer halo



Time of Year

- *Late spring to Early Summer
- *When weather shifts from cold and wet to hot and dry



Treatment

- * Lightly rake out to increase air circulation and allow for new growth
- * Maintain at 2 3/4" - 3"
- * Water and mow in the a.m.
- * Fertilize regularly
- * Collect lawn clippings to reduce thatch build-up
- * Sharpen mower blades
- *Water deeply, less often
- *Aerate annually and overseed thin areas

Rust



Identification

- *Fungal disease caused by Puccinia
- *Rust-colored powdery masses of spores on leaf blades or sheaths
- * Rust spores easily come off on shoes, equipment
- * Rust is non-harmful, non-toxic for kids and pets



Time of Year

- * Temps between 20°C - 30°C
- * Severe on turf with drought stress
- * Occurs in areas of shade, poor air circulation



Treatment

- * Lightly rake out to increase air circulation and allow for new growth
- * Maintain at 2 3/4" - 3"
- * Water and mow in the a.m.
- * Fertilize regularly
- * Collect lawn clippings to reduce thatch build-up
- * Sharpen mower blades
- *Water deeply, less often
- *Aerate annually and overseed thin areas

Red Thread



Identification

- * Fungal disease
- * Leaf blades have similar lesions to dollar spot, but not as bleached
- * Circular patches a few inches to several feet
- * "Smokey" border can appear after morning dew



Time of Year

- * More than 10hrs leaf wetness per day for several days
- * Night temps under 16°C for cool-season grasses
- * Night temps 10°C - 16°C for warm-season grasses
- * Most severe in areas of low mowing height



Treatment

- * Lightly rake out to increase air circulation and allow for new growth
- * Maintain at 2 3/4" - 3"
- * Water and mow in the a.m.
- * Fertilize regularly
- * Collect lawn clippings to reduce thatch build-up
- * Sharpen mower blades
- *Water deeply, less often
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Slime Mold



Identification

- *Slime molds belong in the phylum Myxomycota in the kingdom Protista. They are not a true fungus but share characteristics of both fungi and single-celled organisms. There are many different types of slime mold that can affect your lawn & landscape
- *Slime mold appears as patches of white, grey, or purple-black masses on the grass blades (spores)
- *Slight yellowing of the grass blades is possible, as the spores block photosynthesis
- *Can range from a few inches to several feet

Time of Year

- *Slime molds can develop and thrive during periods of warm, wet weather but are most common in summer and autumn after prolonged periods of leaf wetness
- *Slime molds are saprophytic and consume bacteria that feeds on decomposing plant matter.

Treatment

- *Slime mold is not damaging to the lawn and will resolve itself
- *Lightly rake out to increase air circulation and allow for growth
- *Maintain a lawn height at 2 3/4" - 3"
- *Water and mow in the a.m.
- *Fertilize regularly
- *Collect lawn clippings to reduce thatch build-up
- *Sharpen mower blades
- *Water deeply, less often
- *Aerate annually and overseed thin areas

Necrotic Ring Spot



Identification

- *Fungal disease caused by Ophiosphaerella korrae
- *Light green/yellow ring-shaped patches that can range from a few inches to a few feet
- *Brown grass blades have the texture of healthy grass (not dry and brittle) but pull out easily
- *Rings form depressions in the turf

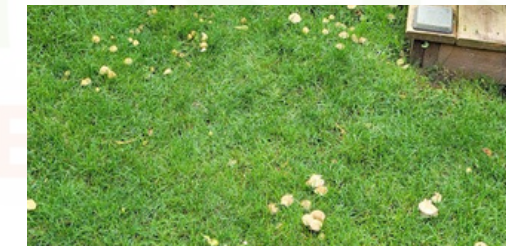
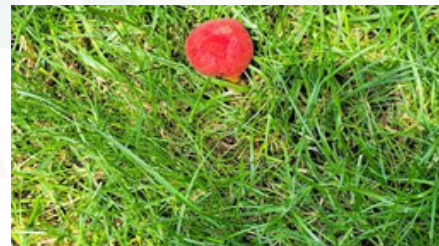
Time of Year

- *Most common when conditions are cool and moist in spring and fall, when temperatures are between 12°C - 28°C
- *Symptoms may be more noticeable during periods of heat/drought stress

Treatment

- *Maintain at 2 3/4" - 3"
- *Water and mow in the a.m.
- *Fertilize regularly
- *Collect lawn clippings to reduce thatch build-up
- *Sharpen mower blades
- *Water deeply, less often
- *Aerate annually and overseed thin areas
- *Syringing: (only recommended to help reduce an identified Necrotic ring spot problem) Water very lightly during the high heat of the day, essentially to activate the fungus and expose it to the sun, therefore decreasing its life expectancy.

Mushrooms



Identification

- *Mushrooms are caused by a variety of fungi that exist naturally in soil
- *There are upwards of 5000 different kinds of mushrooms found in Ontario

Time of Year

- *Different mushrooms can grow at any time of year as long as temperatures are above freezing but spring and fall are peak seasons for mushrooms
- *Mushrooms appears after periods of prolonged moisture
- *Most commonly found in shaded areas (due to moisture)
- *Mushrooms are saprophytes that feed on dead and decaying plant matter

Treatment

- *Knock over mushrooms (mowing, raking, stomp them, practice your golf swing, etc.)
- ** Lightly rake out to increase air circulation and allow for new growth
- *Maintain at 2 3/4" - 3"
- *Water and mow in the a.m.
- *Fertilize regularly
- *Collect lawn clippings to reduce thatch build-up
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