

# Lawn Diseases

## Dollar Spot

**Looks like:** Tan spots.

Dollar Spot develops when temperatures are in the 60- to 85-degree range with high humidity. Usually occurs on lawns, which are not fertilized.

**Control:** Fertilize lawns. Use fungicide if problem is severe.

## Patch

**Looks like:** Yellow patches from several inches to a foot in diameter.

Caused by a mold. Visible after snow melt; patches continue to grow during cool, wet spring. Disappears as weather warms.

**Prevent:** Continue mowing through fall to avoid thick mat of grass for mold to develop on. Do not fertilize in late summer or early fall.

## Brown Patch

**Looks like:** Circular spots 1 to 3 feet in diameter. In the morning look for "smoke ring," a dark gray or dark purple ring around each spot. Ring disappears during day.

Active growth during 80-90 degree temperatures, especially when night temperatures have stayed above 70 degrees. Disappears when weather changes.

**Prevent:** Avoid fertilizers high in nitrogen.

## Powdery Mildew

**Looks like:** White powdery growth on leaves.

Grows on grass in shady areas or where shrubs inhibit good air circulation.

**Control:** Prune shrubs, trees to allow in light and promote air circulation. In shady, moist areas where problem persists, consider an alternative ground-cover.

## Gray Snow Mold

**Looks like:** Circles of matted grasses, tan or gray, 2 to 40 inches or more in diameter. Tiny black spots on leaves.

Develops in winter, continues after snow melt. Disappears when temperatures climb above 45 degrees and the lawn dries.

**Housekeeping:** Thoroughly rake area. Grass will rejuvenate.

## Rusts

**Looks like:** Lawn has yellowish to reddish-orange color. Reddish-orange dust rises when the grass is mowed. Collects on shoes and clothing.

Develops in prolonged period of humid weather when night temperatures are in the 70s and day temperatures are 85 or higher. Worst when lawn is watered frequently and lightly.

**Prevent:** Maintain fertile lawn. Use correct watering practices. Do not mow closely.



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## Stripe Smut

**Looks like:** Leaves have yellowish-green streaks, which turn gray then black. Lawns might become patchy or thin.

Develops during long periods of cool weather in spring or fall. Warmer temperatures correct the condition.

**Control:** Apply high-nitrogen fertilizer early in the day; follow with deep watering. If smut is severe, use fungicide in late fall or early spring.

## Red Thread

**Looks like:** Bright red threads develop near the tips of leaves. Lawn will have whitish or pinkish patches from several inches to several feet wide.

Can be more severe on ryegrass or fescue blends.

**Control:** Fertilize lawn. Do not water in late afternoon. Water deeply in morning, avoid frequent light watering.

## Pythium Blight

**Looks like:** Round spots, which first look like water soaked leaves; leaves then turn brown and die.

Spread when lawn is mowed when wet. Disease is most severe on heavily fertilized grasses. Wet soil and thatch favor the disease.

**Control:** Do not water late in the day. Do not mow when the grass is wet. Avoid excess fertilizer. Dethatch if thatch is more than half-inch thick.

## Fairy Ring

**Looks like:** Large circles in lawn, rimmed with mushrooms. Poor grass growth inside circle.

Dense fungal mat impedes water penetration and grass renewal.

**Control:** Dig out the ringed area including soil one foot beyond the ring. Remove every bit of soil to a depth of one foot. Do not spill any elsewhere on the lawn. Refill the area with new soil; reseed or resod.



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