

# The Turf Doctor

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## Turfgrass Diseases Fact Sheet

Each year fungal disease can be found on most home lawns. Their severity is a factor of your grass type, variety susceptibility, maintenance practices and of course environmental conditions (weather). Certain diseases can cause thinning, undesirable visual results and even death to the turf. The major turf diseases for home lawns are:

**Leaf Spot/ Melting out:** Leaf spot is one of the most prevalent lawn diseases of spring. Cool moist conditions favor development. The first stage appears on the leaves a straw colored spots with reddish borders. As summer progresses, the fungus attacks the stems, crowns and roots which results in browning and eventual thinning of the turf. Common Kentucky bluegrass and the fescues are very susceptible. Most improved Kentucky bluegrasses are resistant.

**Brown Patch:** Brown patch is most likely to occur under hot, humid conditions of summer. Bentgrass is most susceptible. Wet turf aides in the spread of this disease. It is best to water in the early hours of the morning so that leaf wetness is reduced to a minimum.

**Summer Patch:** Summer patch mainly occurs on Kentucky bluegrass, especially sod. It is a root disease, affecting the same spot year after year. The typical symptom (frog eye) shows up in the summer. This disease causes permanent damage by killing the turf. Applications of a systemic fungicide (Golden Eagle) at double rate are necessary to suppress this devastating disease. Severely infected areas should be over-seeded with Turf Type Tall Fescue on mild cases!

**Red Thread:** Red thread is very common, especially on perennial ryegrass. The disease is favored by warm, humid conditions of early summer. The ends of the grass blades will shrivel and turn red to pink in color and may last all summer. Adequate fertility will reduce the severity or extra fertilizer (**STEP**) will certainly reduce or aid in recovery.

**Dollar Spot:** Dollar spot appears as straw colored hour glass lesions on the leaf blades. The disease spreads to a straw colored spot about the size of your palm. The disease is most severe with low fertility levels. Additional fertilizer (**STEP**) will reduce the disease and aid in recovery.

**Rust:** Rust appears in late summer to fall on most lawns. It is especially severe on new lawns. The grass blades will have a reddish to orange cast (fungus spores). Your shoes may have a red tinge on them after being out on the lawn. Adequate fertility levels and growth will aid in combating this disease. A **STEP** application will greatly reduce this disease.

**Snow Mold:** Snow mold is a cool weather fungus of winter to late spring especially on creeping bentgrass. The fungus attacks the leaves and stems. This can kill the turf or severely delay spring green up. This disease must be prevented rather than dealt with curatively. Once damage is visible, fungicides are not effective. Application of a fungicide, (granular PCNB) are necessary in November/December will suppress this fungus.

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**Disease Control:** Fungicide applications are justified when the disease becomes severe and especially when they occur in the same area each year eg. Summer patch. Timing of application (s) is critical with each disease. In many cases a **STEP** application of fertilizer will reduce or eliminate red thread, dollar spot and rust.

↑ Yes! Make a fungicide or **STEP** application for: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Street: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_