

## LAWN ISSUES

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Reddish brown patches, pock marked areas of tan grass, and yellowing. These are lawn issues we are seeing and have been expecting given environmental conditions this year, like rainy weather and now hot temperatures.

Roughly circular patches of reddish-brown grass, especially in tall fescue lawns, are symptoms of brown patch disease. Kentucky bluegrass is also affected but symptoms are less prominent.

To confirm brown patch, inspect individual grass blades in affected areas. Look for irregularly shaped, tan-colored lesions surrounded by a dark margin. It is best to do this just before mowing rather than right after mowing or lesions may be removed.

While brown patch does not kill a lawn, and affected areas recover by spring, good cultural practices should be used to reduce disease. For example, avoid fast release nitrogen applications during summer and avoid evening or night irrigation.

If brown patch causes thinning of an area, overseed with newer cultivars resistant to brown patch. Seeding is best done by mid-September and lawns are best core aerated prior to seeding to help achieve seed to soil contact. Without aeration, overseeding will not be as successful.

Fungicides, although not recommended this late in the season, provide control. If fungicides are used, apply them at the first sign of disease, usually late June into July. Fungicides do not kill the fungus or cure infections. They work best by preventing infections early in the growing season.

I'm often asked if grass clippings need to be collected when disease is present. Research is not showing much benefit to catching clippings and the fungus can be spread by the mower. It would be wise to follow the recommendation of mowing often so no more than one-third of the grass blade is removed during any one mowing; and use sharp mower blades.

Pock-marked areas of tan grass, especially in full sun locations, could be summer patch. This is a root rot disease so dead grass in affected areas is easily pulled. On close inspection, no lesions or leaf spots will be seen on grass blades.

Summer patch is found mostly on Kentucky bluegrass and is difficult to manage. While fungicides can be applied as a soil drench in April or May when roots are infected, they have not proven very effective. Once this disease is established, reseeding or overseeding the area with improved cultivars or changing the turfgrass to tall fescue may be needed.

Don't confuse summer patch for white grubs. White grubs eat the roots making it easy to lift up sod and grubs are easily seen underneath. With summer patch, the grass easily tears away from the soil. At this time of year, if 8 to 10 grubs are found per square foot, an application of Dylox could be applied.

Yellowing of turfgrass at this time of year has almost become the norm so I don't receive as many questions related to it. Lawn yellowing is caused by a combination of hot soil temperatures, too wet of soil, and high pH soils.

Hot soil temperatures and wet soils, often due to irrigation systems rarely being turned off or run too often, lead to root dysfunction reducing the roots ability to take up iron. A nutrient that is not as readily available to plants in high pH soils.

Once soil temperatures cool and irrigation systems are turned off, lawns typically green up. If needed, an application of iron (no nitrogen) can be made to mask yellowing. It is best to apply a liquid application of ferrous or iron sulfate, or other iron source, and do not water it in.