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## COMMON LAWN FUNGAL DISEASES\_BROWN PATCH



There are many lawn conditions that can cause patches of brown, dead grass on your lawn. However, only one gets the official name Brown Patch, caused by a single species of fungus, *Rhizoctonia*. This fungus can survive for years within your soil until conditions are just right and it manifests itself as Brown Patch disease.

Brown Patch is one of the more common diseases that can affect almost any cool-season lawn, especially tall fescue and perennial ryegrass, in particular. Kentucky bluegrass, fine fescues and bentgrass can occasionally be affected, but the damage is usually minimal in these grass types. Brown Patch can also affect a variety of warm-season grasses, including St. Augustine grass and zoysiagrass.

It affects lawns during hot, humid summer weather. It's at its worst after an especially wet summer. It's also quite common in the fall, too, when daytime temperatures may still be in the 25°C (80°F) range while nighttime temperatures are in the 15°C (60°F) range. This can cause heavy dew which can worsen fungal infections.

In addition to heat and humidity, the main factors inviting Brown Patch are excessive nitrogen and irrigation, which means that very lush and green lawns can be susceptible to Brown Patch if the watering is excessive and too frequent, or too much fertilizer is being applied too often.

Other possible causes include lack of air movement, poor soil drainage, excessive thatch, and compacted soils, which means that poorly maintained lawns are more susceptible to Brown Patch disease.

Brown Patch is a foliar disease, meaning that it harms the blades of grass but not the crown of the plant or the root system. Lawns affected by it may recover on their own, without fungicide intervention.

It is generally easy to identify as per the above photos.

Brown Patch disease will thin out your turf, severely affecting the lawn health and needless to say, the curb appeal of your property.

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It usually shows up as large, roughly circular or somewhat irregular patches that are brownish-yellow in color and range from 15 cm (6 in) to several feet in diameter, and appear to be either dry or dead. It can expand its patches rather quickly and can be at significantly high levels if not addressed early. Affected areas sometimes may have a sunken appearance but more often the grass inside the patch simply becomes thinner than the surrounding lawn. The outside of the patch may sometimes appear to be darker than the inside, too. If the disease has been active for a long time, the inside of the patch may recover, leaving a ring of dead or thin grass around it. With St. Augustine grass, Brown Patch can look like a brownish interior patch with a yellow outer ring.

Typically, the affected grass blades usually remain upright, and close inspection shows lesions on the leaves that are tan in color and irregular in shape with a dark brown border. White, cottony, mycelium can be found on dew-covered turf in the early part of the morning.

## PREVENTION/TREATMENT OPTIONS

Some of the conditions that are conducive to Brown Patch are beyond a homeowner's control, such as air temperatures and humidity levels. These may cause a lawn to develop this disease no matter what a homeowner does.

However, you can minimize the chances of Brown Patch with proper lawn care practices:

- ✓ **Do not over-fertilize ---**
  - There's definitely nothing wrong with a periodic fertilizer regimen tailored to your type of lawn and in particular, normal seasonal requirements.
  - However, you should avoid feeding your lawn during excessively hot and humid weather as well as spacing the fertilizer treatments too close together... 4 to 6 weeks apart is a good interval.
  
- ✓ **Use proper watering practices ---**
  - If you water, do it early in the morning so the grass can dry out fully before nightfall.
  - And do it only once to maybe twice per week, at most, but when doing it, give it a good soaking...
  - Ideally, you want less frequent waterings. Putting down more water at a time is better than a brief watering every day or other day.
  - If it's rained recently or dew is collecting on your lawn each morning, your lawn may not need to be watered at that time.
    - Standing dew can be removed by dragging a water hose over the lawn, which will lower the humidity that can cause Brown Patch disease.
  - Also, if you're seeing mushrooms appearing regularly on your lawn, you can likely forego the watering that day...
    - However, be sure to remove those mushrooms by hand as you do not want them spreading themselves by your shoes or lawnmower.
  
- ✓ **Improve air circulation ---**
  - We recommend that you aerate and de-thatch your lawn annually.
  - Improved air circulation will reduce the humidity that causes Brown Patch.
  
- ✓ **Reseed with resistant grass varieties ---**
  - A variety of grasses are available with moderate resistance to the Rhizoctonia fungus.
  - If Brown Patch is recurring every year on your lawn, consider top-seeding your lawn with resistant grasses.
  
- ✓ **Apply fungicide if appropriate ---**
  - Brown Patch does not normally cause permanent damage and most lawns typically recover without chemical treatments.

- For the more extreme cases, there are some effective solutions for controlling Brown Patch.
  - The QoI family of fungicides (strobilurins) are among the best fungicide options because they offer up to 28 days of control, as well as control of other diseases that may occur at the same time.
- That being said, most lawn care experts agree that fungicide treatment is appropriate only for high-value ryegrass and bentgrass turf blends.
  - The first spray of fungicide should be applied immediately after the symptoms first appear, especially if hot and humid weather is expected.

## **\* GENERAL USAGE DISCLAIMER \***

*Please note that some of the above illustrative photos are SQLC's, and some are not. We do not claim ownership of every photo within this document. Nor does our inclusion of them, mean that any rightful owners of these photos necessarily agree with or endorse what we've written within this document. We therefore give credit to those who may be the original owners of these photos --- We've seen them likewise displayed on numerous lawn care websites without links to the original sources, so we're honestly not sure who may be the original photographers. That being said, if anyone wants to use our SQLC photos, they may do so, too, as we're totally fine with that --- Our purpose is nothing more than wanting to educate you about such lawn diseases. We gratefully acknowledge that the following photos, no matter who took them, are some near-perfect examples of various fungal diseases. Whoever photographed them, did so at the perfect time to clearly indicate the main and most obvious symptoms of the diseases --- Our hats go off to them for a job very well done. In utilizing them, we simply wanted to give you the best possible photographic examples of what these particular lawn diseases would look like, to help you identify and know what you're dealing with.*

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## **\*\*\* SPECIAL NOTE \*\*\***

***We love helping our clients have great-looking lawns! Of course, we always welcome your inquiries, but we also want to help educate you, too. So many of you have told us how much you appreciate the articles we make available to you.***

***If there are any questions you may have about your lawn or any challenges or problems you may occasionally encounter with your lawn, don't hesitate to give us a call. As with the above info article you've just read, we also have other highly beneficial lawn care articles, too...***

***Here are some we've created to support you with your lawn care efforts. They can help you identify any problems as well as offer some possible solutions for some of those occasional challenges lawns can encounter.***

***These info articles are not meant to be one-time definitive cures for whatever might ail your lawn. We all wish it was only that simple... But, there are no magic "spray this once and your lawn will be perfect thereafter" solutions... Unfortunately, those don't really exist, as much as we might all like them to. However, there are many things you can do to get your lawn in great shape and keep it that way. We encourage you to glean what you can from any of the following articles that may interest you. And for what you're not sure about, give us a call, let's talk about it, and we'll do what we can to help you.***

***You may reach us at 780-678-6450 if you'd like to receive any of these via email. It would be our pleasure to do our part to help you "make your lawn the envy of your neighbours"...***

...See list of available articles on next page...

***"Your Home Turf Advantage"***

From Our **“PROACTIVE LAWN CARE”** Series Of Articles —

*7 Steps To A Great Lawn*

*Caring For Our Lawn Over The Winter*

*Proactively Preparing Your Lawn For Drought Conditions*

From Our **“WHAT YOU’RE NOT TOLD”** Series Of Articles —

*What You’re Not Told About All-Natural & Organic Lawn Care Alternatives*

*What You’re Not Told About Bats & Their Guano*

From Our **“WHY?”** Series Of Articles —

*Why Is My Grass So Thin?*

*Why Dead Spots On My Lawn?*

*Why Am I Getting Mushrooms In My Lawn?*

*Why Are The Pine Needles Killing My Grass?*

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*How To Get Rid of Ants*

*How To Get Rid of Dew Worms*

*How To Get Rid of Fairy Rings*

*How To Get Rid of Quackgrass*

*How To Get Rid of Thistles*

From Our **“DAMAGE BY DOGS & OTHER CRITTERS”** Series of Articles —

*Fixing & Preventing Dog Spots*

*Damage Caused by Voles*

From Our **“SEEDING LAWNS”** Series Of Articles —

*Grass Seeding For New Lawns*

*Overseeding For Existing Lawns*

From Our **“DIY”** Series Of Articles —

*DIY\_Alternate Ways To Remove Weeds In Gravel Areas*

From Our **“COMMON LAWN FUNGAL DISEASES”** Series Of Articles —

*Common Lawn Fungal Diseases (Compendium Of All Common Ones)*

*Common Lawn Fungal Diseases\_The Usual Causes*

*Common Lawn Fungal Diseases\_Snow Mold*

*Common Lawn Fungal Diseases\_Leaf Spot & Melting Out*

*Common Lawn Fungal Diseases\_Ascochyta Turf Leaf Blight*

*Common Lawn Fungal Diseases\_Brown Patch*

*Common Lawn Fungal Diseases\_Summer Patch*

*Common Lawn Fungal Diseases\_Pythium Blight*

*Common Lawn Fungal Diseases\_Red Thread*

*Common Lawn Fungal Diseases\_Rust Diseases*

*Common Lawn Fungal Diseases\_Powdery Mildew*

*Common Lawn Fungal Diseases\_Dollar Spot*

*Common Lawn Fungal Diseases\_Fairy Ring*

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...See more on next page...

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## **INFORMATION ON OUR FIVE PRIMARY LAWN CARE SERVICES —**

### **FERTILIZER & WEED CONTROL:**

*Our Fertilization & Weed Control Program*  
*Possible Reasons For Still Having Weeds*  
*Ten Reasons Our Program is Different*

### **ENRICH SOIL ENHANCER:**

*Our Enrich Soil Enhancer Program*  
*Different Soil Types Have Different pH Levels*

### **WEEKLY MOWING:**

*How The Weekly Lawn Mowing Works*  
*Our Quality Control Program*  
*Ten Reasons We Are Different*

### **CORE AERATION:**

*Why Aerate Your Lawn?*

### **POWER RAKING:**

*Why Power-Rake Your Lawn?*

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