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## COMMON LAWN FUNGAL DISEASES \_RED THREAD

Does your lawn have what appears to be wilting or dying patches with thin, red or pink webbing or spiky threads or strands extending from the grass blades? It's likely that this is Red Thread.



One form of this fungal disease has thread-like strands, as its name implies. The other form appears as fuzzy, cotton-candy-like pink clusters of mycelium.

Red Thread is sometimes confused with a disease called Pink Patch. At first glance, it also has a somewhat similar appearance to Pink Snow Mold and Dollar Spot. However, Red Thread is positively identified by its thread-like/antler-like structure or mycelium clusters.

You'll know you have it if you see it --- The infected patches of grass turn light tan or light brown color, and the leaf tips may be covered with fine pink to red threads, giving the turf an overall pinkish-red color. The best time to look for Red Thread is in the early morning when there's still dew on the blades. When the grass is wet, Red Thread appears darker red in color; when dry, it looks more pink.

In addition to the pinkish-red color, affected lawns have grass blades that look ragged and seem to be dying back from the tip of the leaf. The affected grass will appear in irregularly shaped, straw-like patches that range in size from 5 cm (2") to 25 cm (10") normally, but can be as large as 3 feet in diameter.

While affected areas of grass may appear to be dead, the pinkish-red growths that appear in the grass do not infect the roots of the plant, so the grass is not killed by the fungus.

Among the first lawn diseases of the growing season, Red Thread is extremely common in spring to early summer, but can also appear in late summer and fall as well, if the conditions are right.

In fact, during very wet growing seasons, Red Thread can become a serious problem during wet summers and during heavy dews in the fall.

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Though Red Thread can occur in many different climates, it is more common in areas experiencing prolonged periods of moisture (excessive rain or heavy dew), or if routinely watering in late evening (which is never a good idea). Temperatures in the 18°C (65°F) to 24°C (75°F) range with high humidity are primary conditions for Red Thread appearing.

Most grass species are affected but cool-season grasses like fine leaf fescues, perennial ryegrass, Kentucky bluegrass, and bentgrass are most susceptible.

The disease can be more severe on poorly aerated lawns that have a high thatch layer, as well as lawns that are grown in nutrient-deficient soils. It's most likely brought on by low levels of nitrogen in the soil, and although it's a relatively harmless disease, that's a pretty good indicator that it's time to fertilize your lawn.

## PREVENTION/TREATMENT OPTIONS

- ✓ Since it's not possible to entirely remove the fungus or control the weather, **the most effective treatment for Red Thread is to fertilize your lawn with the proper amount of nitrogen as part of an ongoing balanced fertilization program ---**
  - Nitrogen applied to the lawn in the fall will nourish the re-emerging turf in the spring, but much of that nitrogen will be gone by late spring.
  - Be aware that it may take 2 years or more of periodic fertilizer treatments to prevent Red Thread from coming back in the spring.
  - We offer an excellent optimized regimen of up to 4 liquid fertilizer applications per year (Ours also includes a contact herbicide for very effective weed control).

**In addition to the above, red thread is best controlled with a combination of proper lawn care practices:**

- ✓ **Water only in early morning and deeply once a week** (or if an excessively hot and dry summer, then twice a week) ---
  - Do not allow your lawn turf to get excessively dry or excessively wet.
- ✓ **Be sure your lawn has proper drainage ---**
  - Water-logged soil will invite the disease, too.
- ✓ **Aerate your lawn annually to relieve compaction ---**
  - Aeration helps to increase water and nutrient saturation as well as helps to stimulate root development.
  - This will also help create an environment where natural bacteria in the soil can be beneficial.
- ✓ **Power-rake (dethatch) your lawn annually ---**
  - Some thatch (up to 1/2 inch) will help to prevent Red Thread, but too much thatch will cause problems as the fungus resides in the soil and the thatch layer of your grass.
- ✓ **Over-seed your lawn with less susceptible grass types and do some organic compost top-dressing.**
- ✓ **Don't use a blunt or badly adjusted mower ---**
  - Make sure your mower blades are sharp, otherwise you'll bruise or tear at your grass and remove chlorophyll from the grass blades thereby leaving it more susceptible to the fungus.
  - Bag all the grass clippings when mowing, otherwise you can spread it to uninfected parts of your lawn.
- ✓ **Additionally, if deemed necessary, consider applying iron treatments during the fall and spring ---**
  - It not only helps control any moss but will harden the grass and make it less susceptible to Red Thread.

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✓ **There are preventative chemical control options available ---**

- However, by the time the red threads are seen, it is usually too late and not very effective.
- As such, treating Red Thread with fungicides is generally not necessary and not recommended for residential lawns.
- However, chemicals are a viable option for the most extreme cases where proper lawn care practices just don't seem to be doing enough. This involves the application of a fungicide, usually a type of QoI inhibitor (strobilurins), or trifloxystrobin.

**\* 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...

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?*

From Our **“HOW TO GET RID OF...”** Series Of Articles —

*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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