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“Your Home Turf Advantage”

COMMON LAWN FUNGAL DISEASES_RUST DISEASES

We all know what rust looks like on our cars or tools, which is caused by a chemical reaction between iron and oxygen in the presence of water or air moisture. However, rust diseases on grasses are caused by various species of a common lawn fungus.

It's the proper name for it and the rust gives grass blades a rusty appearance. If you pull a couple blades out of your grass and look closely at them, they'll be coated with yellowish-brown to orange-red dust or spores.



The lawn rust typically begins with yellowing your leaf blades and then small yellowish spots appear which turn to orange, red or brown colouring as it matures. The spores can be rubbed off the grass blades with your fingers. Overall, in affected areas, the grass coverage is thin and the blades are weak and break easily, but fortunately, the grass isn't apt to die off completely.

Grasses typically affected are Kentucky bluegrass, perennial ryegrass, and tall fescue.

Grass rust fungus spreads easily through its spores. The formation of the spores often occurs when there are cool nights with heavy dew and frequent rainfall. It usually shows up in late summer or early fall, particularly during wet years. It's essentially warm cloudy, humid conditions followed by intermittent bright sunlight that favour the formation of the spores. Basically, anytime the grass is not allowed to dry out after a period of 6 to 8 hours, rust on the grass may begin to form.

Similarly, if the grass is shaded most of the time by perhaps overhanging trees branches, etc., that also can produce the more humid conditions with less air circulation to dry out the grass and can lead to lawn rust.

Grass rust problems also appear more frequently when thatch in lawns is too thick or mowing is infrequent.

Sometimes rust will appear in the spring due to a lack of nitrogen, if the lawn has not been fertilized properly, so be sure to feed your lawn regularly throughout the year to help prevent it.

Essentially, grass blades coated with lawn rust minimize the ability of the grass to photosynthesize.

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When the leaves are excessively covered with these spores, the photosynthetic action cannot be carried out efficiently and the fuel for good health and growth is not adequately collected.

Additionally, the accumulation of spores create dust and is spread easily, by anything... from the wind, or grass blades brushing against one another, and from people, animals or even insects walking through it. Be mindful of that when mowing and that it may also cling to shoes and lawn or garden equipment, and thereby spread elsewhere.

PREVENTION/TREATMENT OPTIONS

Lawn rust forms almost exclusively when the grass is in a period of slow growth, so anything that interferes with your lawn's normal, healthy growth puts it at risk for this fungus. There's nothing you can do to control the weather but there are plenty of other ways to optimize your lawn's growing conditions. Most grass rust problems can usually be resolved with good maintenance and healthy practices such as:

- ✓ **Mow the lawn frequently to keep it at a moderate height ---**
 - Bag your grass clippings and also be sure to rinse off lawn equipment to prevent the spread of disease.
- ✓ **It is always a good idea to aerate the lawn when faced with any fungal lawn infections, as many fungi prefer moist, poorly draining soil to grow in ---**
 - Aeration reduces soil compaction so water, fertilizer, and air, can reach your lawn's roots more effectively.
- ✓ **Additionally, power-rake your lawn to remove any thatch that becomes more than ½ inch deep ---**
 - If you allow too much thatch layer in your lawn, it will minimize air circulation and provide an ideal breeding ground for the fungus spores.
- ✓ **As alluded to, lawn rust can be prevented by fertilizing the lawn with nitrogen-based fertilizer at periodic intervals (every 4 to 6 weeks or so).**
- ✓ **Watering for long periods at long intervals rather than for short periods at short intervals to ensure that the grass continues to grow thickly ---**
 - Watering your lawn in the cooler hours of the early morning gives the grass a chance to dry out before the higher heat of the day occurs.
 - Avoid watering in the evening because it creates the ideal wet and cool conditions for lawn rust fungus to grow and release its spores.
- ✓ **In all but the most severe cases, rust fungus in lawns does not require fungicides ---**
 - If necessary, some fungicides that work best on lawn rust include:
 - DMI (DeMethylation inhibitor) and QoI (strobilurin).
 - However, if you decide to go the chemical route, fungicide should be used only on well established lawns and only if your other lawn care efforts have failed.
 - The fungicide should be applied before the lawn goes dormant for the winter.
 - Most lawn rust infections clear up with just 1 treatment.

...Please see next page...

*** 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.

***** 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"...

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

...See more on next page...

"Your Home Turf Advantage"

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

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

...See more on next page...

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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?