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“Your Home Turf Advantage”

COMMON LAWN FUNGAL DISEASES_SNOW MOLD

Snow mold is a fungal disease that appears in the early spring as the snow melts.

There are two common types of snow mold: gray snow mold (a.k.a Typhula blight) and pink snow mold (a.k.a Fusarium patch).



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Pink snow mold can be more severe than gray snow mold, as it can kill the crown and roots of grass. Gray snow mold usually only affects the grass blades. As the names suggest, gray snow mold shows a white-to-grayish webbing in the infected areas, while pink snow mold is grayish to pink.

In our region, it's primarily the gray snow mold that is encountered. The pink snow mold is more akin to regions where there's seldom snow accumulation but there's ongoing cool and humid weather, such as the Pacific Northwest. In those regions pink snow mold can occur year round. Pink snow mold doesn't require snow above the grass.

Most of what follows pertains to gray snow mold, a.k.a. Typhula blight ---

Gray snow mold is a cold-weather fungus primarily affecting cool-season grasses such as Kentucky bluegrass, perennial ryegrass and fescues. It can occur when there is an extended duration of heavy, deep snow cover on ground that is not completely frozen. All that weight on fragile grass blades, coupled with lots of winter moisture, not to mention ground cover from leaves, long grass, and lawn debris, can spell trouble in the form of snow mold. As such, it normally occurs particularly under leaves that had not been cleaned up the previous fall or amongst long matted-down grasses that should have been mowed at a shorter height before winter had arrived.

This is fairly common in snow belt areas with long winter months, occurring in the early spring as the snow melts. It's evidenced by patches of matted-down crusty, discoloured grass, either as bleached or scalded-looking, grayish-white or straw-colored circular patches ranging in size from a few inches to several feet across or with a whitish-pinkish web-like coating. The infected areas often overlap to form larger irregular patches.

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Essentially, snow mold appears as soon as the snow begins to melt and it may continue to thrive and spread as long as the weather is cool and damp. Usually, the discoloured spots begin to shrink as the weather becomes hot and dry.

Though the fungal spots you discover in the spring are unsightly, they are usually not very serious. As the weather warms up and the lawn continues to dry out, the infected areas will gradually green up. However, in some years given the right ongoing conditions that are cool and wet, the spots may persist through the summer and into the fall.

It's important to note that you are not likely to encounter snow mold every year, but you may notice that it's most pronounced in those springs when the first snowfalls months earlier were earlier than normal and heavy enough to cover your lawn and the ground beneath it, that wasn't yet fully frozen.

When additional snowfalls continued to fall, the warm ground beneath the snow was actively harboring fungal growth, and then come the spring thaw, snow mold has appeared. A cold winter without much snowfall is less likely to produce snow mold damage in the spring.

PREVENTION/TREATMENT OPTIONS

The key to beating snow mold is prevention, as there are no single application fungicide treatments that work on snow mold in the spring when the snow melts.

- ✓ **To help your grass dry out, rake the damaged spots gently to aerate the grass blades.**
- ✓ **Remove any thatch layer that is more than ½ to ¾ inch thick.**
 - This can be done in the fall or the spring.
 - However, if you're dethatching or power-raking in the spring, this should not be done until the lawn has dried out a bit and has been mowed at least 2 or 3 times, thereby having given a chance for any new grass shoots to first take root in the spring.
- ✓ **Mow the lawn at a shorter height until the mold is no longer actively growing.**
 - Taller grass will hold more moisture, which fosters fungal growth.
 - Especially in the late fall, be sure to mow your grass at 1.5" to 2" height to minimize the moisture that might be subsequently trapped under the first snowfall of the season.
 - However, don't cut it too short that you end of scalping your lawn which would invite other problems.
 - Bagging up all grass clippings for the last few mowings in the Fall will also help.
- ✓ **Don't let your leaves pile up on your lawn.**
 - Use your mower to mulch up any leaves on your lawn and bag them to remove them.
 - If you've got far too many leaves to mow or mulch, be sure to rake up all leaves in the fall, which will reduce any moisture that would otherwise get trapped under the leaves covering the grass.
- ✓ **"IF" you have habitual problems with snow mold, consider reducing the amount of nitrogen in your NPK ratios in the fall fertilizer you apply.**
- ✓ **Avoid heaping large piles of snow along walkways and driveways thereby creating large snowbanks... and likewise the same for large wind-blown snow drifts.**
 - Spreading out the snow evenly on your lawn, especially once it's starting to warm and melt, will help it melt more quickly in the spring rather than holding moisture during the prime fungal growth periods.
 - Also try to prevent snow compaction, restrict the amount of walking on the turf in the winter months.

✓ **If the damage is severe, overseeding the bare spots in the late spring may help.**

- In spite of your best efforts, dead, dying, or discoloured grass may never recover its healthy appearance so reseeding to repair those areas may be the best approach.
- Remember not to fertilize or mow these seeded spots until the new grass is vigorously growing and has matured sufficiently.

* Avoid using fungicides if possible, but if your lawn infections tend to be severe or an annual nuisance, you can apply a preventive spray of thiophanate-methyl in late fall after your last mowing, just before the first expected snowfall. This can help.

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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"...

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

"Your Home Turf Advantage"

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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 Fairy Rings

How To Get Rid of Quackgrass

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Damage Caused by Voles

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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

...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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