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COMMON LAWN FUNGAL DISEASES_SUMMER PATCH

Summer Patch is somewhat similar in appearance and management to Brown Patch. However, Summer Patch is worse for your lawn because it kills the roots as well as the grass. Unfortunately, reseeding is oftentimes necessary after you've had a serious Summer Patch infection.



Summer Patch tends to be most active in hot weather. Disease symptoms often appear during lawn stress in summer months. If your lawn is slow-growing or has wilted turf, and is dotted with tan or brownish, straw-colored irregular circles or patches, rings, or crescent shapes of dead grass that increase in size throughout the summer, it's likely Summer Patch. Oftentimes it may have small clumps of green grass inside of the patches, too.

Affected patches are typically only 3 to 8 cm (approx. 1" to 3") in diameter, but they may enlarge or coalesce to about 30 cm (approx. 12") in diameter.

While not quite as common as other lawn fungal diseases, Summer Patch can be one of the more difficult to eradicate diseases in annual bluegrass, Kentucky bluegrass, and fine fescues. Older varieties of creeping bentgrass maintained at low mowing heights can also develop symptoms of Summer Patch. Other types of lawn grass, such as tall fescue, perennial ryegrass, and zoysiagrass, tend to be more resistant or immune to the disease.

As mentioned, Summer Patch is rather destructive in that it kills grass by infecting and destroying its roots. It can invade root tissue and remain undetected even during the Winter months. It starts to do its damage in the late spring to early summer once soil temperatures rise above 18°C (65°F).

Generally, it's between June and September during periods of high humidity when daytime temperatures are over 28°C (82°F) that this fungus is apt to invade your lawn's vascular system, destroying roots and essentially disrupting your grass's ability to take up crucial water and valuable nutrients.

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Also, excessively wet periods followed by hot and dry conditions can bring on severe symptoms as such dramatic changes can severely stress a lawn especially later in the summer. Affected grass will often die during these dry periods as there may not be enough root system to support it.

You can check for yourself --- Pull up a small tuft of grass and examine its roots. Healthy grass roots are lighter in color and longer whereas the roots of grass infected with Summer Patch are dark brown or black and short because they are essentially rotting.

As shown in the photo below, Summer Patch blighted areas will often occur on lawns that receive a lot of direct sun or are on south-facing slopes or near sidewalks, driveways, buildings, or otherwise potentially more-easily stressed areas.



In the cool weather of fall, the grass may begin to seemingly recover and grow back into these dead areas again. The disease, however, may reappear in previously affected areas the following summer, and may even increase in intensity.

Be mindful that low mowing heights can contribute to your lawn's susceptibility to Summer Patch.

Likewise, the condition of the soil beneath your lawn can be a contributing factor; compacted soils delay or prevent the establishment of deep root growth and the turf is thereby weakened as a result of slow water and nutrient intake and an increase in thatch build up. However, it is less of a problem during cool summers with adequate normal rainfall.

PREVENTION/TREATMENT OPTIONS

As with most lawn fungal diseases, proper lawn maintenance and care is the best preventative medicine.

- ✓ **You should never cut more than 1/3 the length of grass blades when you mow ---**
 - Cutting off more than that length from grass that has been otherwise left to grow longer is a common cause associated with this disease.
 - Likewise, scalping or mowing too closely weakens the grass and makes it vulnerable to infection.
 - Also, be sure that your mower blades are always sharp so that you're not ripping and tearing at the grass with blades too dull to make the proper clean cut.
 - Also, be sure to bag any grass clippings to prevent any further fungal spread.

- ✓ **Unless part of a balanced periodic regimen of fertilizer, avoid adding too much nitrogen-based fertilizer to your lawn during the summer.**
 - This is why it's important to buy fertilizers with NPK values that are optimized for the time of the year.

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- ✓ **Watering lightly and frequently in hot weather is another practice to avoid** as it continually dampens the shallow areas where the Summer Patch fungus resides, helping promote its development ---
 - This is likely to be mentioned for most lawn diseases but watering less frequently (only once per week or perhaps twice a week when very hot and dry) but putting down more water when watering is much better for lawns as it will promote deeper root growth, too, as opposed to shallow root growth that makes lawns more susceptible to fungal infections.

- ✓ **Soil aeration is very important to prevent thatch buildup and improve drainage ---**
 - The thatch layer in any lawn is the place for fungi to live, overwinter and grow, and given the right conditions, attack the grass.

 - Spring and late summer/early fall are good times to reduce thatch and soil compaction via aeration.
 - Aeration also helps to increase water and nutrient saturation as well as helps to stimulate root development.
 - If you have heavy clay soil or clay loam soil annual aeration is highly recommended to prevent your soil from becoming compacted.

- ✓ **Summer Patch can cause severe damage in a short time and preventative fungicides may be necessary to suppress or eliminate its spread ---**
 - Strobilurins and DMI (propiconazole) fungicides are most effective.
 - These applications should be timed in the late spring when the fungus is active, targeting applications when soil temperatures reach 18°C (65°F).
 - However, once disease symptoms appear, control options are quite limited and fungicides are not very effective at this late stage.

*** 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.

...Please see next page...

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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

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

...See more on next page...

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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

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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