

## COMMON GRASS DISEASE AND CAUSES

A sick lawn is an unhappy lawn, and it's bound to tank your yard's curb appeal. That's where knowing the common causes and early symptoms of grass disease comes in handy. Follow along with this in-depth guide so can get ahead of the spread.

### COMMON GRASS DISEASES

DISEASE	GRASS TYPES	SIGNS	CAUSES
Brown Patch	Cool-season	Sunken, circular patches of tan, dead grass. Measures up to 3 ft. in diameter.	Underwatering, mowing too low
Dollar Spot	Both	Blades of grass look water-soaked and contain yellow spots ringed with reddish-brown coloring. Roughly the size of a silver dollar (2 to 6 in. in diameter).	Overwatering, watering too late in day
Fairy Ring	Cool-season	Brown- or dark-green circular patches that grow mushrooms or puffballs. Typically measure 6 ft. in diameter.	Thick thatch, overwatering
Gray Leaf Spot	Both	Tiny blade lesions that spread into larger spots, eventually encompassing the entire blade. Spots can be colored from tan to gray, with smaller purple dots in them.	Overwatering, compacted soil
Large Patch	Warm-season	Circular, discolored patches with an orange or yellow ring around them. Causes shoots to be pulled up easily. Measures 1 to 3 ft. in diameter.	Mowing too low, dull blades, underwatering
Leaf Spot	Warm-season	Dark-purple or black spots that grow to have a tan center and surrounding yellow halo.	High soil pH levels, mowing too low, underwatering
Pink Snow Mold	Cool-season	Pink, white, or tan patches of dead grass that are ringed by copper-colored blades. Typically appears after snow melts. Measures 2 to 10 in. in diameter.	Overwatering, extremely cold weather, snow, thick thatch
Pythium Blight	Warm-season	Brown, grease-colored spots that grow cotton candy-like fungus. Measures about 2 cm. to 2 in. in diameter.	Overwatering, compacted soil, high soil pH levels
Red Thread	Warm-season	Circular- or oval-shaped patches with reddish-pink hue that grow downward from the tip of the blade. Measures about 2 in. to 3 ft. in diameter.	Overwatering, thick thatch, watering too late in day
Rust	Warm-season	Begins as tiny yellow spots that grow out into larger orange, red and brown circles. Powdery, dust-like spores leap from the blade, if touched.	Over-fertilizing, compacted soil, overwatering
Summer Patch/ Necrotic Ring Spot	Warm-season	Dark-green or straw-colored patches that measure up to 2 in. in diameter.	Mowing too low, overwatering, over-fertilizing

These diseases have a variety of causes, so refer to the chart on the next page and get the know-how to help nip any disease in the bud with the proper lawn care techniques.



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CAUSE	PROBLEM	SOLUTION
Dull Blades	Tear grass instead of slicing through it, causing breaks that become a point of entry for disease.	Sharpen the blades for your Exmark mower before every mowing season. Clean cuts reduce the risk of disease.
Compacted Soil	Frequently walking across specific sections of your yard compacts the soil, making it difficult for your lawn's roots to grow.	Aeration helps reduce compaction, letting water reach the roots to encourage growth.
High Soil pH Levels	Overly-acidic soil leeches vital nutrients that plants need to grow.	Powdered or pelleted limestone. Have your soil's pH level tested yearly.
Mowing Too Low	Overly-short grass can lead to the sun's heat damaging your grass and can expose the soil and roots, causing them to dry out more quickly.	Different grasses have different mowing heights, so do your research before you mow.
Over-fertilizing	Some fertilizers contain too many nutrients, which can stunt your lawn's root system.	Every grass has different needs, so do your research beforehand to determine fertilizing frequency.
Overwatering	Overwatering can drown your grass, and also causing it to become a hotbed for disease.	If you're watering every day, scale that back to once or twice a week. You should give your lawn, at most, 1 in. of water per session.
Thick Thatch	Thatch—the layer of organic matter that accumulates at the base of your grass—holds excess moisture, which prevents water from getting to the roots.	Regular dethatching gets rid of these packed-in twigs, leaves and lawn debris. Frequency depends on your grass type, so do your research.
Underwatering	Effectively dries out your grass, allowing certain diseases to move in.	Water at least once or twice a week, depending on your grass type.
Watering Too Late In The Day	Doesn't allow your lawn to dry, encouraging fungal growths.	Water in the morning, helping your lawn absorb the water and dry out throughout the day.

If you're having trouble getting rid of a disease, consider the use of a fungicide.  
If the problems persist, contact a licensed lawn care professional.