UNIVERSITY OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

Sclerotinia Dollar Spot

Turf

Pest Fact Sheet 41

Introduction

Dollar spot affects most of the cool-season grasses such as bluegrass, ryegrass, fuscue and bentgrass.

Description

The overall symptom pattern for Sclerotinia dollar spot varies with mowing practices. Under close mowing (as on golf greens) the disease progresses from very small initial spots of dead turf to distinctly circular, straw-colored areas 2-3" in diameter, sharply outlined against the surrounding healthy grass. Under these conditions,the patches may coalesce into larger irregular patches. On the taller turfs typical of residential lawns, irregularly-shaped, straw colored areas of dead grass appear, ranging from 2-6" diameter. Under ideal conditions, the patches may coalesce to cover large areas. When large areas are infested, the disease is often mistaken for drought injury.

Affected individual grass leaves first show yellow-green blotches that become water-soaked and finally bleach to a straw-color with reddish-brown margins. Lesions usually extend across the entire leaf, and dieback of the leaf from the tip to the lesion is common. In the early morning hours, while dew is still present on the leaves, a cobwebby white, fungal growth may appear on infected leaves.

Disease Cycle

The causal fungus overwinters in the crowns and roots of infected grass plants as mycelium (fungal threads) or thick-walled crusts of fungus termed sclerotia. In the early summer (when the temperature reaches 60 degrees F) the organism begins growth, reaching a peak of activity during humid weather with temperatures from 70^{o} F to 80^{o} F.

Spread of the pathogen to new areas occurs primarily by transport of infected plant material with mowers, traveling irrigators, and other maintenance equipment.

Grass growing under low soil moisture conditions is more susceptible than when adequate soil moisture is provided. Hence, severe outbreaks of the disease can and do occur during seasons of low rainfall.

Sclerotina dollar spot is less of a problem on turf growing in soil with high nitrogen fertility. It has been

shown, however, that resistance to the pathogen actually decreases with increased nitrogen nutrition fertility; and that the beneficial effect of high nitrogen nutrition is due to faster plant recovery during periods unfavorable for disease development. Soil pH does not influence disease development.

Control

Maintain adequate to high nitrogen fertility. Water deeply and as infrequently as possible without causing moisture stress. Water early in the day. Do not mow wet grass.

Registered fungicides include: Rubigan, Twosome, Chipco 26019, Dithane, Maneb, Thiophamate-methyl and Thiram. Be sure to follow the recommended label rates.

Applications are made from June to September. There is good residual control (4-6 weeks) when systemics are used. Optimum control using protectants is achieved when fungicide applications are made at 7-14 day intervals during periods of disease outbreak.

Summary

1.	Causal Agent:	Fungus
2.	Plant Parts Attacked:	Leaves
3.	Major Symptoms:	Spot in leaves and patches in turf
4.	Time of First Noticeable Symptoms:	Early summer
5.	Spray Program:	Systemic fungicides; Protectant fungicides
6.	Number of Applications Per Season:	4 - 6

Stop! Read the label on every pesticide container each time before using the material. Pesticides must be applied only as directed on the label to be in compliance with the law. All pesticides listed in this publication are contingent upon continued registration. Contact the Division of Pesticide Control at (603) 271-3550 to check registration status. Dispose of empty containers safely, according to N.H. regulations.

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