



*Turf*

---

# Powdery Mildew

Pest  
Fact **43**  
Sheet

## Introduction

Powdery mildew occurs most commonly on the cool-season grasses such as bluegrasses and fescues.

## Description

The fungus usually appears first as isolated areas of fine, gray-white cobwebby growth on the upper surface of the leaves. This growth rapidly becomes more dense, and may cover the entire leaf giving it a gray-white appearance. In cases of severe outbreaks, sections of entire grass stands may be dull white, rather than green. Powdery mildew is usually more severe on turfgrass growing in shaded areas than in full natural light. The disease symptoms are most common during the spring and autumn.

## Disease cycle

The pathogen survives the winter months in dead grass leaves from the previous season, and in a dormant state in infected grass plants.

Conditions favorable for the development of powdery mildew include: (a) reduced air circulation (b) high atmospheric humidity, but no free water on the surfaces of the leaves (c) low light intensity (d) an air temperature of 65<sup>0</sup>F.

## Control

**Cultural Practices:** Where powdery mildew is of frequent recurrence, changes to improve air movement and reduce grass shading will aid in disease reduction. Avoid high nitrogen fertility. Resistant varieties are available. The grass should be mowed relatively high in mildew-prone areas. When persistent powdery mildew occurs, consider ground covers other than grasses.

**Chemical Control:** Consult your county Extension Educator (see county office telephone listing on reverse side) for specific pesticide recommendations.

## Summary

Causal agent	Fungus
Plant parts attacked	Leaves
Major symptoms	Mildew
Time of first noticeable symptoms	Fall

## UNH Cooperative Extension County Office Telephone Numbers

**Belknap**

(603) 527-5475

**Carroll**

(603) 539-3331

**Cheshire**

(603) 352-4550

**Coos**

(603) 788-4961

**Grafton**

(603) 787-6944

**Hillsborough**

Goffstown

(603) 641-6060

**Merrimack**

(603) 796-2151

**Rockingham**

Brentwood, NH

03833

(603) 679-5616

**Strafford**

(603) 749-4445

**Sullivan**

(603) 863-9200

**Stop!** It is always the pesticide applicator's responsibility, by law, to read and follow all current label directions for the specific pesticide being used. If unsure of registration status of a particular pesticide product, contact the NH Division of Pesticide Control at (603) 271-3550. Store pesticides in their original containers in a locked cabinet or shed away from food. Dispose of unused pesticides or empty containers safely, according to NH regulations. If you suspect pesticide poisoning, call the New Hampshire Poison Control Center at 1-800-562-8236.

  
William E. MacHardy  
Extension Specialist, Plant Biology

  
Cheryl A. Smith  
Extension Specialist, Plant Biology

Visit our website: [ceinfo.unh.edu](http://ceinfo.unh.edu)

UNH Cooperative Extension is an equal opportunity educator and employer.  
UNH, U.S. Dept. of Agriculture and NH counties cooperating.

Revised 1/03