

DOLLAR SPOT

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CHARACTERISTICS

Dollar Spot, a disease of turf grasses caused by the fungus *Sclerotinia homeocarpa*, attacks most turfgrasses grown in the South. Bentgrass, Hybrid Bermuda grasses and Zoysia are most susceptible to dollar spot. The disease occurs from spring through fall, and is most active during moist periods of warm days (70° - 85° F) and cool nights (69° F) in the spring, early summer and fall. The disease is spread from one area to another by water, mowers, and other equipment or shoes.

SYMPTOMS

On fine textured and close-cut turf, the disease appears as round, brown to straw-colored and somewhat sunken spots approximately the size of a silver dollar; thus, the common name "Dollar Spot". In coarse textured grasses maintained at taller cutting heights, the dead spots are larger and more diffuse. Under these conditions dollar spot can be confused with brown patch *R. solani*. Dollar Spot is readily distinguished, however, by characteristic lesions on the leaf blades of live plants near the border of the affected area. Lesions are light tan with a reddish-brown border, and usually radiate from the margins of the leaf blade. On fine bladed grasses such as bentgrass, the lesions usually girdle the leaf blade. If the turf is examined when the disease is active early in the day before the dew dries, cobweb-like mycelium of the fungus can be seen growing on affected areas. During early stages of the disease, affected plants may appear water-soaked and wilted, but spots quickly fade to a characteristic straw color.

DOLLAR SPOT PHOTOS



DISEASE DEVELOPMENT

Several factors influence the occurrence and severity of Dollar Spot. Bentgrass, Hybrid Bermuda grass and Zoysia are most susceptible; while St. Augustine and Centipede are less frequently attacked by Dollar Spot. Low soil moisture has been reported to enhance Dollar Spot activity, but moisture from dew, light rain or irrigation must be present on the foliage for the disease to develop. Low nitrogen and potassium levels in the soil have been reported to increase the severity of Dollar Spot. Some rather severe outbreaks of Dollar Spot have been brought under control by the application of soluble nitrogen fertilizer. However, the beneficial effect of nitrogen is thought to be due to rapid recovery of the grass during periods of reduced disease activity. Research has shown that nitrogen increases the susceptibility of grass to Dollar Spot. The Dollar Spot fungus is capable of growth over a wide range of temperatures (50° to 90° F), but the disease development is greatest at temperatures between 70° and 80°.

RECOMMENDATION

Apply 2 ounces of SLAP per 1000 square feet of turf. Re-apply every 30 days as needed. For best results also apply Root Vigor 8-2-3 at 15 pounds per 1000 sq. ft.



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