

## Large Patch Disease in Turfgrass

Large patch disease of turfgrass is most common in the fall and in the spring as warm season grasses are entering or leaving dormancy. Large patch is caused by the fungus *Rhizoctonia solani*. It can affect zoysia grass, centipedegrass, St. Augustinegrass and occasionally bermudagrass.

Symptoms of this lawn disease include irregularly-shaped weak or dead patches that are from 2 feet to up to 10 feet in diameter. Inside the patch, you can easily see brown sunken areas. On the edge of the patch, a bright yellow to orange halo is frequently associated with recently affected leaves and crowns. The fungus attacks the leaf sheaths near the thatch layer of the turfgrass.

Conditions that favor large patch include: Excessive thatch; excess soil moisture and poor drainage; too much shade which stresses turfgrass and increases moisture on turfgrass leaves and; soil and early spring and late fall fertilization.

Fall is the best time to control large patch. Often proper turf fungicides are difficult to find locally. Look or ask your retailer for the active ingredient myclobutanil or triadimefon. Examples of these two fungicides are Immunox Lawn Disease Control and Bayleton, respectively. Triadimefon may also be found as Green Light Systemic Lawn Spray or Hi-Yield Lawn Fungicide Granules. Make the first application from late September to early October with a follow up application 28 days later. Other fungicides you may want to try and that may be somewhat easier to find are Captan or Mancozeb.

Keep in mind that while fungicides may help, improving cultural practices is more important and result in long term control.

According to our turf specialist at the University of Georgia, the following are cultural practices that should be followed to help turf grasses resist large patch disease.

- Use low to moderate amounts of nitrogen, moderate amounts of phosphorous and moderate to high amounts of potash. Avoid applying nitrogen when the disease is active.
- Avoid applying N fertilizer before May. Early nitrogen applications (March-April) can encourage large patch.
- Water timely and deeply (after midnight and before 10 AM). Avoid frequent light irrigation. Allow time during the day for the turf to dry before watering again.
- Prune, thin or remove shrub and tree barriers that contribute to shade and poor air circulation. These can contribute to disease.
- Reduce thatch if it is more than 1 inch thick.
- Increase the height of cut.
- Improve the soil drainage of the turf.
- Apply lime if soil pH is less than 6.5 (Except on centipede lawns).

## EXTENSION CALENDAR

- October 1      Sign-up deadline for Master Equine Management Program
- October 16    2008 Farm Bill Overview  
6:30 pm – Franklin County Agricultural Center. A meeting for area farmers interested in the implications of the 2008 Farm Bill. A meal will be served. Those interested in attending must call the local NRCS Office prior to October 1. (Hartwell: 706 376-5451)