

YELLOW PATCH

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In 1980, Rhizoctonia cerealis was determined as being the causal fungal agent of yellow patch disease in turfgrass. The fungus was isolated from turfgrass which demonstrated irregular yellow rings and foliar lesions which had occurred in the fall.

Yellow patch (cool weather brown patch) is a turfgrass disease which presently occurs in most temperate regions, recently becoming a problem in Michigan and the Great Lakes region on Kentucky Bluegrass lawns. It has also been reported on bentgrass putting greens. Presently, there is no recommendation for prediction of occurrence. Preventive or curative treatments are also not available despite current research being conducted.

To date, most yellow patch infestations have been reported to occur in the early spring and fall when temperatures range between 50°F and 75°F with moist weather conditions. The infection appears in a circular pattern or patch ranging in size from a few inches to nearly two feet in diameter. Individual blade lesions are bleached and sclerotia (an overwintering fungal structure) may be located near the crown of the plant. When symptoms first occur, a purpling of leaf blades may sometimes be seen on the outer fringe of the circle. Characteristic chlorotic rings, which can contain normal colored turf within, may be confused with Fusarium blight which demonstrates similar symptoms.

Field inoculations with R. cerealis on healthy turfgrass are currently being conducted to determine favorable environmental conditions which will allow infection to occur. Fungicide trials are also being performed on a diseased yellow patch area. This may eventually enable a course of action to be taken to help restore turfgrass which has already been infected with yellow patch.