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Rutstroemia floccosum

The dollar spot disease of turfgrasses was originally attributed to the causal fungal pathogen *Sclerotinia homoeocarpa* by F.T. Bennett in England in 1935. During the past decade turfgrass pathologists in the United States have determined that the causal pathogen is not *Sclerotinia homoeocarpa,* but have not been able to clarify the specific causal pathogen. **Recently research at the University of Minnesota supported by research at Michigan State University, has proposed that the fungus *Rutstroemia floccosum* (Powell and Vargas) is the causal pathogen in North America.** It is a facultative-parasitic, fungal pathogen in the order Helotiales and class Discomycetes. Whether this same fungal species is the causal pathogen of dollar spot in the United Kingdom and Europe is yet to be determined.

ASK DR. BEARD

Q *What can I do to grow bermudagrass turf in shaded areas?*

A **Bermudagrass (*Cynodon* spp.) is one of the poorest of the warm-season turfgrasses in terms of adaptation to shaded areas.** The high light intensities of full sun induce horizontal growth of the lateral stems of bermudagrasses. Unfortunately, the low light intensities of the shaded environment result in a distinct emergence and upright growth of lateral stems, including both the rhizomes and stolons of bermudagrass. This distinct upright growth results in a major percentage of the bermudagrass shoot growth being removed during mowing. The result is a drastically reduced leaf area and a very thin turf of poor quality for bermudagrass. For the physiological reasons just described, **all turfgrass cultivars of bermudagrass grown for turfgrass purposes have traditionally exhibited very poor shade adaptation,** as have Adalayd seashore paspalum (*Paspalum vaginatum*), American buffalograss (*Buchloe dactyloides*), and certain purple-stemmed cultivars of St. Augustinegrass (*Stenotaphrum secundatum*).

Perhaps a breakthrough has occurred in the recent release of a new bermudagrass cultivar. Specifically, it is named MS-Choice, which is a *Cynodon dactylon* released from Mississippi State University by Dr. Jeff Krans and colleagues. It is attributed to have enhanced shade tolerance compared to other bermudagrass cultivars. In addition, it forms a very dark-green, compact, leafy, prostrate turf with very few seedheads. This vegetatively propagated cultivar is suggested for use on sports fields, golf course tees and fairways, and home lawns with a mowing height that can range from 0.5 to 2.0 inches (13–50 mm). An elevated cutting height usually is preferred for shaded turfs.

Ask Dr. Beard: TURFAX, c/o Ann Arbor Press
P.O. Box 20
Chelsea, MI 48118
Email: skip@sleepingbearpress.com