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Pythium Blight in Michigan – Turf Tips

Michigan State University Extension Service

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Pythium Blight In Michigan

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Pythium blight (cottony blight) is an important disease in regions of the United States where daytime temperatures are routinely in the 90's, night temperatures stay above 75 degrees F, and where high humidity is common. Under these conditions, **Pythium** blight can devastate large areas of turf within 24 hours. Such conditions normally do not exist in Michigan and therefore **Pythium** blight is rarely a serious problem. **Pythium** blight cases in Michigan have been confined to areas with poor surface or soil drainage.

Symptoms

Pythium blight consists of spots initially ranging in size from 1/2 to 6 inches. These spots first appear as dark, greasy or slimy water soaked areas on the turf. When the spots dry, the leaves shrivel and turn light brown or straw colored. In the early morning when the humidity is high, a fluffy white mold growth may be seen in association with these lesions (fig. 1). If turf is mowed while the fungus is still active, the disease will spread in streaks. Remember that **Pythium** blight appears during humid warm weather and in poorly drained areas.

Cultural Management

Pythium blight management in Michigan begins with improving soil drainage, which eliminates problems in most instances. Other cultural practices that reduce the



Figure 1: Typical **Pythium** blight symptoms

Table 1: Recommended fungicides for the management of **Pythium** blight.

Common Name	Trade Name	Manufacturer
Chloroneb	Tersan SP	duPont
Ethazole	Proturf Fungicide II	O. M. Scott
	Koban	Mallinckrodt
Metalaxyl	Subdue	Ciba-Geigy
Propamocarb hydrochloride	Banol	Upjohn Co.

severity of **Pythium** blight include reducing the amount of nitrogen applications just prior to and during warm weather and improving air circulation.

Chemical Management

Chloroneb (Tersan SP), ethazole (Koban) are effective fungicides for

the management of **Pythium** blight when an outbreak occurs. Table 2 is a list of fungicides effective in the management of **Pythium** blight.

Notice: Use all fungicides in accordance with label directions. Do not misuse or misapply pesticides.

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