LATE SPRING TURF GRASS DISEASE

Stripe smut of turfgrasses has become increasingly important in recent years. Kentucky bluegrass, creeping bentgrass, and annual bluegrass are affected by this perennial disease.

One should periodically inspect sod and turfgrass areas during May and June for stripe smut. It is one of the few turfgrass diseases which survives the winter in stolons and crowns. The fungus then grows systematically in the direction of new spring stolon and tiller development.

Black, soot-like stripes running parallel with the grass blade veins may be the first signs of stripe smut in May or June. Infected plants become stunted and pale green to yellow while individual leaf blades may be curled. Although growth of the causal agent, **Ustilago striiformis,** within stolons is greatest at temperatures between 60-70° F, evidence of the disease may not appear until warmer temperatures.

Turfgrass showing disease symptoms usually dies in patches because of high temperatures and moisture stress during July and August. However, if turf areas receive extremely good (adequate fertility and moisture) infected plants may not die. This may be the reason stripe appears more severe in turf which has a high level of management.

Best control is the use of varieties which show resistance to stripe smut. A-20, A-34, Anheuser dwarf, Baron, Delta, Fylking, Park, Pennstar, and Sodco are varieties with varying degrees of resistance. Merion, Newport, Prato, and Windsor commonly show symptoms of stripe smut and are among the most susceptible varieties of bluegrass. There does not seem to be any great differences in susceptibility between creeping bentgrass varieties. However, smut free seed or seed treated with either thiram or captan can greatly reduce the disease. Tersan 1991, applied in late fall or early spring at the rate of six ounces in five or ten gallons of water per 1,000 square feet, can be used for control of existing disease areas.

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TUCO INTRODUCES INSECTICIDE FOR TURF, LAWNS, AND ORNAMENTALS

A NEW insecticide for control of turf, lawn, and ornamental insect pests has been introduced by TUCO, Division of The Upjohn Company.

The new insecticide, Proxol 80 SP, is a water-soluble powder designed for use on golf courses and other large fine turf grass areas, lawns, and ornamentals. It is effective against sod webworms, cutworms, and chinch bugs in fine turf and controls numerous insects affecting ornamentals. It also provides control of those insects resistant to chlorinated hydrocarbons.

TUCO researchers report that Proxol is one of the fastest-acting turf and ornamental insecticides on the market, as it kills insects either on contact or ingestion into the stomach. Sod webworms and cutworms are killed within 48 hours of application. The insecticide can be used alone or in conjunction with disease control programs epmloying TUCO's Acti-dione fungicides.

Proxol breaks down rapidly and does not accumulate in the enviornment. It has little effect on beneficial insects when applied according to directions. The insecticide is available from TUCO distributors throughout the United States.

Pest aside

CREEPERS! INSECTS KEEP ON COMING!

by Stanley Rachesky
Entomologist — University of Illinois

THE INSECTS keep coming and coming and coming. Keep your eyes open in the next few weeks for a variety of insect problems that may pop up in your back yard. Stroll around your property during the evening hours and check over your trees and shrubs for developing problems. Ninety-nine per cent of the time the average homeowner doesn't catch the problem until the shrub is half gone.

Tree borers will soon begin feeding under the bark of trees. Check for sawdust-like material (called frass) being pushed out of the holes made in the bark. These holes can be located just about anywhere on the tree; in the trunk, on branches.

A tree that is dead or in a dying condition near the top shows the first indication of a borer problem. A favorite tree of area residents is the birch. Bronze birch borers are very prevalent in northern Illinois and have killed a large number of these beautiful trees.

The University of Illinois recommends the insecticide dimethoate (also known as Cygon or De-Fend) for control. Use at the rate of two teaspoons per gallon of water. Spray the trunks and limbs thoroughly. A repeat spray treatment should be applied three weeks after the initial application.

Newly set trees should have their trunks wrapped with heavy paper for the first two years or until the trees are growing vigorously. Keep your trees well fertilized and watered. A healthy tree will survive a borer attack much better than one that is not in the best of condition.

Eastern tent caterpillars are just about ready to leave their webs and begin defoliating trees. As the weather warms the feeding activity increases and so does the damage. Check your trees for webs.

The Eastern tent caterpillar especially likes wild cherry; however, it is also found in great abundance on willow, peach, apple, and a variety of ornamental trees. Control may be accomplished by spraying with Sevin (carbaryll). This insecticide is available as a 50 per cent wettable powder, or as a liquid concentrate. Follow label directions for application rates.