

WEEDS and TURF

PEST CONTROL

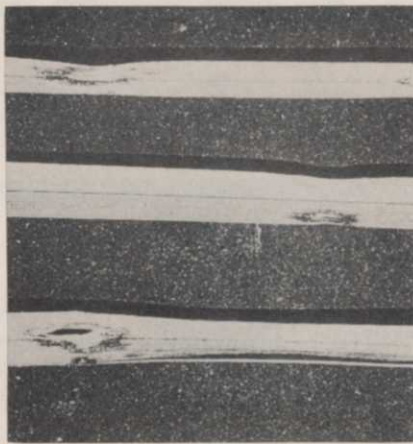
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How to Control Turf Diseases



Snowmold (above and left) normally occurs when temperatures are 32 to 50 degrees F., with high soil moisture. Patches of injury may run together and are identified by a grey-white color. Apron of the golf course green at left is badly infected with snow mold. The undamaged portion (upper right) was treated with a fungicide.



If bluegrass leafspot (right and below) is not controlled, the infection may become a crown or root rot, and cause dead or badly thinned-out areas as appear in the turf pictured below. The disease, *Helminthosporium* spp., first appears as a brownish spot on blades. As the spot grows, the blades are girdled as shown at right.



In recent years the turf business has received increased emphasis because more homeowners are trying to match the lawns and landscapes found on golf courses, large estates, and around well-kept industrial sites. The care and special treatment required for the upkeep of these lawns, however, is far beyond the usual homeowner's ability. Contract applicators, consequently, may be called in to treat ailments.

CAs may also have a problem if the lawn deficiency is unfamiliar to them. One big headache is the control of fungus diseases on turf. Avoided in many cases because of the complexity of the pest organisms, fungus control is a service which, when mastered, provides the CA increased business potential, and helps make his services complete.

Many homeowners don't realize how common fungus-caused turf diseases are. Incidence of fungus damage is often passed off as "bad grass" or "dog spots" (caused by the urine of female dogs), which will return to life in due time. Unfortunately, this diagnosis is not always true, and a lawn may be severely afflicted by a fungus disease before the cause is identified.

Fungus Infection

Turf grasses, like human beings, have resistance levels. As long as grasses are well kept, there is less chance of infection. But if care is slipshod, chances for fungus damage are greatly increased.

Fungi, assumed by many to live only on dead or decaying matter, have been observed to attack live grasses which are in a weakened condition. Infection of this sort further reduces resistance and paves the way for multiple outbreaks, which lawn experts refer to