

scape architects are facing an important challenge to help keep Maryland green. Growth feeds upon itself, he said, and pressures on land use will be even more intense in the counties around our cities. To avoid "slurbs," a slum-like blight of suburban areas, all the knowledge and skills you can muster will be needed," he said.

Industry-wide standards, uniform specifications for growing and installing sod, and a Maryland sod law to help protect the public and assure orderly marketing and development of the industry drew attention at the day-long meeting. "The home builder, architects and other buyers should be able to purchase sod by specifications and be sure of what they are getting," Dr. Elwyn Deal, turfgrass specialist, University of Maryland, told the group.

Leafspot and Foot Rot In Bluegrass Lawns

Leafspot and foot rot—also known as "melting out"—occurs when bluegrass decreases in vigor and eventually fails to respond to fertilizer and water.

According to Ohio State University studies, symptoms of the disease include the appearance of dark or reddish-brown spots on leaves and the shriveling and browning of leaves and stems. Patches of the lawn appear to "melt out," and crabgrass invades the areas of dead grass.

R. E. Partyka, OSU plant pathologist, reports that the disease most severely attacks common Kentucky bluegrass.

To reduce disease damage, says Partyka, avoid over-fertilization. Mow the lawn at a height of 1½ to 2 inches, as a lower cut depletes the grass' food supply. Remove the clippings after cutting

because the fungus may be in or on them.

Chemical control consists of spraying lawns with a fungicide at 10-day intervals in the spring. Or, apply a fungicide as soon as the turf greens up, to be followed by a second application in 3 weeks and a third in 4 weeks. If the disease persists, several fall applications are advisable.

Fungicides recommended by OSU studies include: Dyrene, Tersan OM, Captan, Fore, Zineb, Daconil 2787 and Kromad. Follow directions and use five gallons of water for every 1,000 sq. ft. of lawn area, says OSU. For better results, OSU recommends adding a small amount of household detergent plus enough pressure to drive the spray to the base of the plant.

Diagnosing and Treating Nematode Troubles

Nematodes — slender, microscopic roundworms or eelworms—feed on plant roots and are a real threat to turfgrass. Diagnosing nematode injury is difficult, reveals R. E. Partyka, plant pathologist at Ohio State University, and is often confused with fertilizer burn, nutrient deficiency, poor soil aeration, drought and insect damage.

Partyka describes nematode-injured turf as bunchy, stunted and often yellow in color. Grass blades die back from the tips. Later the turf may thin out, wilt and die in irregular areas with no specific symptoms on the plants. Damaged roots may be swollen, stubby and dark in color.

Since nematodes cannot be detected with the unaided eye, soil samples from a suspected area should be diagnosed in a laboratory. (Contact your State Land-Grant University).

If nematodes are present, keep grass growing vigorously by watering, fertilizing and following

good cultural practices. If severe, Partyka recommends applying Nemagon EC-2 or Fumazone 70E at the rate of 1½ to 2 pints mixed with 10 to 15 gallons of water drenched on 1,000 sq. ft. of turf.

Water the turf immediately after application to insure penetration and to prevent toxic effects. Treat in the spring or fall when soil temperature is above 55°. Aerifying the turf before application improves results. Do not apply chemical to newly seeded areas.

Heavy Water, Fertilizer May Cause Grass Wilt

To help prevent wilt, water grass less frequently and don't apply fertilizer during the wilting season, reports Harry Meusel, Yale University.

Meusel explains that wilt occurs when grass loses more moisture than it absorbs. Heavily watered grass has twice as many surface pores as lightly watered grass and will lose moisture faster and wilt sooner at temperatures above 70° F. After fertilization, heavily watered grass wilts even more quickly because more water evaporates from the plant.

Light intensity, which affects the size of surface pores, also influences wilting. Grasses in shaded areas wilt more slowly than those in sunny areas.

Meusel recommends that a phenol mercuric acetate solution applied to grasses can help control wilt. This closes the pores of the leaf. But the best safeguard against wilting is a strong root system.

Heavily watered grass usually has short, stubby roots because moisture is readily available near the soil, whereas lightly watered grass has long, thin roots that reach deep into the soil and are less susceptible to wilting.