

VEGETATION MANAGEMENT

By Roger Funk, Ph.D., Davey Tree Expert Co., Kent, Ohio

Q: Last winter many of our lawns were covered with snow mold. What is the best fungicide to apply, when should it be applied and at what rate?

A: The two most common snow molds are Fusarium blight (pink snow mold), which causes small, circular patches to develop in the turf, and Typhula blight (gray snow mold), which develops only under snow cover and produces larger, more irregular patches. Snow molds readily occur during periods of high humidity and air temperatures of 32° to 45° F. Snow falling on unfrozen ground provides ideal conditions for disease development.

A combination of fungicides will give the best results, and there are several labeled for either or both of the snow molds. We have found an application of Tersan 1991 plus Tersan SP about mid-November (before snow cover) gives good results. Of course, another application in midwinter will increase the protection, but this is not often practiced because of the expense and the uncertainty of a sufficient thaw for a treatment. Always follow the manufacturer's directions for rate and other information.

Cultural practices can help decrease the in-

cidence and severity of snow mold and should be considered where snow mold is a problem.

- 1) Remove excess thatch
- 2) Avoid succulent turfgrass growth in late fall
- 3) Rake leaves in fall
- 4) Continue mowing in fall until turfgrass growth ceases
- 5) Rake matted patches of snow mold in spring

Q: We own a golf course in southeastern Iowa. Our problem is crabgrass. What is the best product(s) to use and at what time of year? Time and money are extremely important as my wife and I do all the work ourselves.

A: I checked with Iowa State Extension Horticulture and was told that their tests have shown no significant difference between the cost or effectiveness of Balan (available only as a granule) and Dacthal. Both products must be applied before the crabgrass seeds germinate which, in southeastern Iowa, occurs about the second week in April, depending upon climatic variations. The best biological indicator in your area is lilac and the materials should be applied before the earliest lilac blooms.

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