



10/11/18

News from Your Extension Agent:

The case of the mysterious brown patch

Since the rain and cooler weather we had in mid-September, your lawn may be the victim of these mysterious brown patches. Unfortunately, it is fairly common around this time of year. See figure 1.



Figure 1. Brown patch in turfgrass yard in Camp County. Photo courtesy of Kaycee Davis.

What is it? “Brown patch” or “large patch” is a common fungal disease of warm season turfgrasses in the spring and fall. This is the most chronic and economically important disease of both St. Augustinegrass and zoysiagrass in Texas.

What causes it? The fungus *Rhizoctonia solani*, and only under certain conditions. The fungus survives in the summer heat but thrives when temperatures are cooler and the soil is wet. Once the temperature drops below 70 degrees F, the fungus spreads in the grass’s sheaths, stolons and roots. If grass is over-fertilized, poorly drained, over-irrigated or has been mowed too low repeatedly, this fungus spreads more rapidly.

How can you determine at home, if this is the case of your brown patches? Diseased shoots should pull easily from the sheath where they attach to stolons. Diseased stems and sheaths show dark brown lesions. See figure 2 and 3.



Figure 2. Stem infected with brown patch. Photo courtesy of AgriLife Fact Sheet E-633.

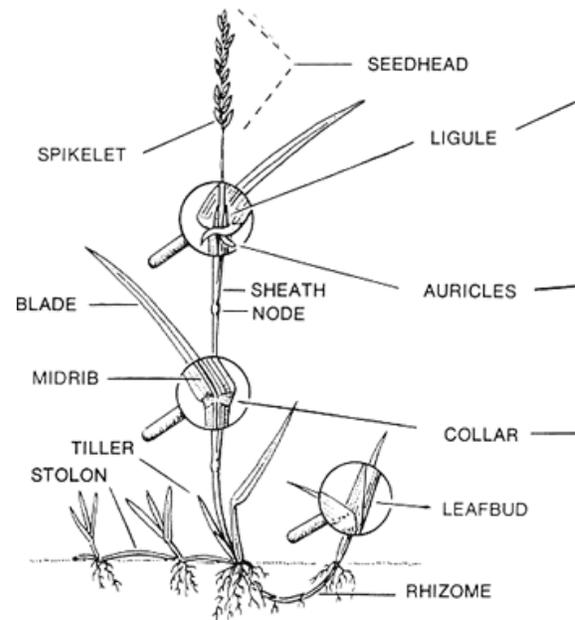


Figure 3. Parts of grass. Photo courtesy of <http://www.caes.uga.edu/>.

Treatment? Unfortunately, once the disease has been established, it can be difficult to get rid of. Occasionally, it may be necessary to re-sod the damaged area. This is a condition that will reoccur if conditions are right, every year. Below is a list of management practices to help avoid occurrence of brown patch.

- Proper fertilization (6 weeks before first frost and 3 weeks after green up)
- Balance nitrogen fertility
- Soil aeration and proper drainage
- Reduce leaf wetness periods
- Water early in the morning, avoid watering in the heat of the day
- Mow to appropriate heights (2-3 inches for St. Augustinegrass and 1-2 inches for zoysiagrass)
- Remove thatch

In some instances, a fungicide is appropriate. The best time to apply a fungicide is before symptoms occur (or immediately after) and when the temperature drops below 70 degrees F in the fall. Applying fungicides in the spring is not cost effective. Applying fungicides after symptoms occur is less effective, as the fungus has already spread and caused the damage. Turfgrass will not rejuvenate from the damage until next spring. A list of some of the appropriate fungicides is below, chemical ingredient followed by trade name.

- Chloroneb (Terraneb SP, Teremec SP)



- Myclobutanil (Eagle, Golden Eagle)
- Triconazole (Trinity, Triton)
- Maneb (Maneb Plus Zinc F4, Maneb 75DF)
- Mancozeb (Fore, Fore Flo, Dithane T/O, Dithane WF, Pentathalon LF, Pentathalon DF)
- Fludioxonil (Medallion)

Please see Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Fact sheet E-633 for complete list of products.

If you should have any questions related to this or any other turfgrass issue, please feel free to contact me at the Camp County Extension office, 903-856-5005, camp-tx@ag.tamu.edu.

All data and recommendations are based on Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Resources and UGA Extension.

Sincerely,

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