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MISCELLANEOUS

Slime Mold on lawn grass

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FIG. 1

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Scientific Name: *Physarum cinereum*

Biology:

- Slime molds are primitive organisms that lack cell walls and flows or moves like amoebae

Types of Turfgrass Affected

- All commonly grown turfgrasses as well as the weeds associated with these lawns can be colonized by *Physarum cinereum*
- St. Augustinegrass and bermudagrass are most commonly affected in the Galveston-Houston area

Period of Primary Occurrence: late spring and summer

- Especially during warm weather after a heavy rain

Identifying Characteristics

- Slime molds in lawns feed on dead organic matter, protozoa, fungi and bacteria in the thatch
- Under warm, wet summer conditions, slime molds move onto turfgrass leaves where they develop into small round clusters of fruiting structures called sporangia (Fig. 2-4)
- These sack-like structures are about the size of a pin head
- Purple spores contained within the grayish-white fruiting structures drop to the thatch and develop into amorphous masses of protoplasm
- While *Physarum cinereum* and other species of slime molds are saprophytic on turf, they can cause the foliage to become chlorotic (yellow) if they persist for several days
- Due to the reduction of light reaching the grass plus interference with respiration and transpiration, colonies of slime mold coating the blades can eventually result in the death of the grass
- These sack-like organisms can be found on clover and other weeds in the turf and on soil and thatch
- Colonies of *Physarum cinereum* in turf can cover single blades of grass but are more


FIG. 2


FIG. 3


FIG. 4

commonly found in masses four to six inches across

- Spots and streaks up to a few feet across have been observed

Best Management Practices (BMP)

- Chemical controls are not recommended and no over-the-counter fungicides are available that are labeled for control
- Once the spore masses have formed on the grass blades, mowing, raking or watering is normally sufficient to remove the fruiting structures from the grass blades
- Even in well-maintained lawns, infestations of slime mold may reappear in the same area year after year

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Use pesticides only according to the directions on the label. Individuals who use chemicals are responsible for ensuring that the intended use complies with current regulations and conforms to the product label. If the information does not agree with current labeling, follow the label instructions. The label is the law.

Always remember to read and heed six of the most important words on the label:
"KEEP OUT OF REACH OF CHILDREN"

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