

Cornell University
Cooperative Extension
Monroe County

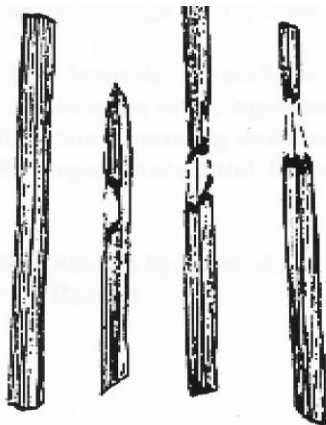
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DOLLAR SPOT OF TURFGRASS

The disease name is derived from the dead straw-colored spots about the size of a silver dollar on close cut bentgrass putting greens. Dollar spot may persist from early summer until early fall, and its incidence seems to be higher in seasons with low rainfall, presumable from the adverse effect of low soil moisture on host plants. It occurs on bluegrass, bentgrasses, fescues and zoysia.

SYMPTOMS:

The pattern of symptoms depends largely on mowing practices. Under close mowing conditions, the circular straw-colored spots (2 – 3" in diameter) are distinctly outlined in the early stages of disease development. With higher cutting heights, the bleached turf spots are irregularly shaped. In the early morning, when dew is still on the grass, a white cobwebby growth of the fungus may be seen over the spot. Spots coalesce to cover large areas when the disease becomes severe.



Left – Healthy Bluegrass leaf
Right – Three infected leaves

On individual grass blades, the invaded tissues are first water soaked and dark colored. As they dry, the lesions turn light tan to straw-colored with a reddish-brown border. The lesions first occur randomly on the leaf blade, and then frequently extend across the entire blade. Older lesion may become quite long and cause blighting of the entire leaf or cut leaf end.

DISEASE CYCLE:

The fungi, *Lanzia* sp. and *Moellerodiscus* sp. survive unfavorable periods as dormant mycelium in infected plants; therefore, fungal movement is brought about by equipment, people, animals, wind or water. When daytime temperatures reach 60 – 80 °F. range, the dormant mycelium resumes growth from infected leaves to nearby healthy leaves, causing new infections.

If nighttime conditions become cool and dry soon after infection has occurred, or if control measures are exercised quickly, infection may not progress beyond scattered leaf lesions. If the grass is growing rapidly, the problems may disappear after one or two mowings. If favorable weather (warm nights, with

dew forming on leaves) persists after infection, and if control is not achieved, entire grass plants may be killed and typical “dollar spots” may appear on the turf.

MANAGEMENT:

Mow grasses at the recommended maximum height if possible. Try not to remove more than 1/3 of the leaf surface in any one mowing. Maintain adequate soil moisture, but avoid sprinkling in the late afternoon or evening. **Do not over water.** The incidence of dollar spot is lower on turfgrasses maintained with adequate nitrogen than on nitrogen-deficient turf. Adequate nitrogen fertilization in the late spring and summer may help prevent dollar spot, but excess applications may encourage other turf problems (e.g., brown patch, summer patch, and drought stress).

Varieties of bluegrasses and fescues differ in susceptibility to dollar spot. Bluegrasses which exhibit greater resistance include the improved varieties Adelphi, America, Aquila, Bonnieblue, Bristol, Eclipse, Midnight, Touchdown, Vantage, and Victa. Greater susceptibility is exhibited by varieties, which include Ram I, Mystic, Estar, Gnome, and Pennstar. Fescues which are more resistant include Jamestown, Agram, Checker, and Shadow chewings, Biljart, Reliant, Scaldis, and Tournament hard fescues.

Many fungicides are available for dollar spot management. They include systemic fungicides containing the active ingredients benomyl, iprodione, or triadimefon, and the protectant fungicides containing chlorothalonil or thiram. The systemics should be drenched into the turf for longer lasting control. Foliar protectants must be reapplied as the product label recommends.

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9/95, 8/05 Revised

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