



## Snow Molds of Turfgrass

Winter diseases of turf grasses are associated with cold, wet periods and sometimes prolonged snow cover. All of the cool season grasses: Kentucky Bluegrass, fescues (turf type tall & fine, and perennial ryegrasses may be infected. Bent grasses are most susceptible. Two diseases, Typhuyl blight (formerly gray snow mold) and Microdochium patch (formerly pink snow mold), are common in New York, and may occur singly or side by side. Since different fungicides are used to control each of these diseases, it is necessary to distinguish between them.

### Symptoms

Typhula blight caused by *Typhula incarnate* and *T. ishikariensis* is a true snow mold and appears as roughly circular bleached patches up to several feet in diameter. The infected grass may be matted and surrounded by a white-to-gray halo of fluffy fungal growth as the snow recedes. This disappears as the grass dries. Dry turf appears bleached, tan or gray to silver white and is brittle and crusty. Examination of the diseased plants reveals tiny tan, brown or black BB-like bodies (sclerotia) on or in infected leaves and leaf sheaths. The severity of the disease varies. It is particularly severe when turf has been subjected to a prolonged deep compacted snow cover. Although the disease is unsightly, it rarely kills the grass.



Typhula blight (gray snow mold) Tony Koski, CSU

Microdochium patch, caused by *Microdochium nivale*, produces similar-looking patches, usually less than a foot in diameter. In contrast to Typhula blight, a pinkish cast at the outer margin of the patch may be observed under wet conditions. Dry infected turf appears bleached and matted. No sclerotia are associated with



Microdochium patch (pink snow mold) Photo: Jon Nelson, Colorado State University Cooperative Extension, <http://www.colostate.edu/Depts/CoopExt/4DMG/>

diseased plant tissue. This disease can become severe when turf is subjected to prolonged periods of cool, wet weather from early autumn to late spring. This disease does not require snow cover to develop as Typhula blight does. A severe infection by *Microdochium nivale* kills the turfgrass.

### Cultural Management

These diseases thrive in temperatures just above freezing (32-45°F). Both can be reduced, culturally.

- ⇒ Avoid late fall applications of fertilizer that stimulates succulent (and therefore disease-susceptible) growth just before freezing weather begins. (apply fall fertilizer prior to October 1)
- ⇒ Continue mowing turf as long as it continues growing in the fall.
- ⇒ Removed leaves or straw mulch from newly seeded area before snow covers the ground.
- ⇒ Avoid compacting snow over the lawn.

- ⇒ Where winter diseases have caused damage, rake the matted grass, encouraging new spring growth. I
- ⇒ If reseeding areas where these diseases have been a problem, contact your Cooperative Extension office for information on turfgrass varieties exhibiting some resistance to infection by these diseases.
- ⇒ If winter diseases have been severe or widespread in past years, or if susceptible varieties or species are being grown, a preventative fungicide program is necessary.



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### Chemical Management

Fungicides are usually not warranted for snow mold in home lawn situations. Cultural practices provide ample management. In situations with repeated severe infection, fungicides may have a place. These are applied preventively according to the label instructions

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This publication contains pesticide recommendations. Changes in pesticide regulations occur constantly and human errors are still possible. Some materials mentioned may no longer be available, and some uses may no longer be legal. All pesticides distributed, sold, or applied in New York State must be registered with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC). Questions concerning the legality and/or registration status for pesticide use in New York State should be directed to the appropriate Cornell Cooperative Extension specialist or our regional DEC office. Read the label before applying any pesticide.

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## 2015 Fungicides for home lawn use in New York State

Active Ingredient	Azoxystrobin	Propiconazole	Thiophanate-methyl
Trade name	Heritage*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Bonide Infuse Systemic Disease Control Lawn &amp; Landscape RTU</li> <li>◆ Bonide Infuse Systemic Disease Control</li> <li>◆ Monterey Fungi Fighter</li> <li>◆ Maxide Dual Action Disease Killer RTU Spray</li> </ul>	Bonide Infuse Systemic Disease Control Lawn & Landscape
Microdochium patch (pink snow mold)	X		X
Typhula blight (gray snow mold)	X		X