

Rainbow Gardens Fungus Prevention and Treatment Schedule For warm season southern grasses in SC Texas including: St. Augustine, Bermuda and Zoysia

Chances are if you've suffered from fungal or insect damage in the past and it went untreated, it most likely will rear it's ugly head back up again. Remember that prevention along with a consistent fertilization schedule will be your best defense against any of these problems.

FUNGICIDE - It's always best to bring in samples and/or pictures so we can help you clearly diagnose the issue you are experiencing with your turf, but the following are common fungus issues we experience here in San Antonio:

Take-All Root Rot (TARR): Usually occurs late March - May (not a hot weather disease) - TARR is a major disease problem in St. Augustine grass that will cause the leaf tissue to turn yellow, pull loose from runner (similar to grub damage, except no grubs present in soil.) In the affected areas of the lawn, you might find both green and yellow leaf blades. Close examination (might need magnification) of the runners will reveal short, dark brown to black roots. If TARR is the problem, then an application of sphagnum peat moss is one of the best treatments for this disease problem (fungicides rarely work). Apply approximately 1 to 2 bales of the peat moss per 1,000 sq. ft. to the affected areas of the lawn and thoroughly soak the peat moss until it is wet. We have seen better results from a top dressing of peat moss than we have with the application of any fungicide in most cases. Repeat peat moss application a year or two later as needed.

Slime Mold: June-August - Slime mold presents itself as patches of grass, about hand-size, that appear to have cigarette ashes sprinkled on them. No harmful damage from this fungus, except perhaps a little shading of the areas affected. You can hose off the spores, brush them off with your shoe, or mow to remove them from the turf.

Gray Leaf Spot: June- early September - Watch out for gray-brown, blotchy to diamond - shaped lesions on the grass blades (mostly on St. Augustine lawns). If you see this on your lawn, think back to if you just applied nitrogen to the turf through the summer, because you saw yellowed-leaves. You might have thought your turf needed more nitrogen, but in fact, the application of extra nitrogen could have increased likelihood of fungus. Systemic fungicides like Fertilome F-Stop, Bonide Infuse, Bayer Advanced Fungus Control, can help, but also refrain from applying nitrogen fertilizers from summer until cool fall temps.

Brown Patch: Usually occurs Mid September - October (but we've seen it in spring!) - look for 18-24 inch yellowing, irregular patches that quickly turn brown. These patches may merge into each other. Infected blades of grass will pull easily from runners, and you will see the left over, decayed leaf blade attached to runner.

***To avoid** the dreaded **Brown Patch fungal disease**, make sure you are not watering at night especially during these cooler months. Do not put your lawn to bed wet!

***To treat** the dreaded **Brown Patch fungal disease** after you already have it, you must treat it with a systemic lawn fungicide like: Fertilome F-Stop, Bonide Infuse, Bayer Advanced Fungus Control. If brown patch has been a recurring event in your turf, you might opt to treat as a preventative when conditions are favorable for disease and before disease symptoms are apparent. (cooler weather, excessive rain/humidity).

*Horticultural cornmeal is an organic alternative preventative/treatment to fungicides, as well as is the peat moss mentioned above in the TARR section. The cornmeal must be "horticultural grade" not what you use to make Grandma's cornbread. Also, don't get it confused with "corn gluten" which is used as an organic weed pre-emergent.

