



Dollar Spot

O & T Guide TD-1

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Causal Agent and Hosts: Dollar spot, caused by the fungus *Sclerotinia homeocarpa*, is a disease that occurs on most turfgrass species, though hybrid bermudagrasses, bentgrass and zoysia are the most susceptible species.

Symptoms: Dollar spot first appears as small (approximately the size of silver dollars), circular patches of brown or straw-colored grass. The patches become sunken overtime and may coalesce into larger, irregular spots. During conditions of heavy dew, fine cottony webbing (mycelium) may occur over the diseased grass. Leaves become water soaked with brownish margins and often die back from the tips. Leaf spots have reddish brown margins which spread out from the leaf margins. Necrotic tissue between the margins may constrict resulting in an hour-glass shaped lesion or the girdling of the leaf blade.



Advanced symptoms of dollar spot. Photo: P. Vincelli, University of Kentucky.



Cottony mycelium of the dollar spot fungus. Photo: B. B. Clarke, Rutgers University.



Early symptoms of dollar spot. Photo: The Pennsylvania State University.



Leaf lesion caused by the dollar spot fungus. Photo: www.omafra.on.ca.

Conditions for Disease: The fungus survives unfavorable periods as mycelia or sclerotia (dormant, compact, hardened masses of mycelia) in soil and infected plant material. The fungus is easily spread by equipment and foot traffic.

Dollar spot is most severe during warm, humid days with cool night temperatures. Dry soils increase the disease; however moisture must be present on the foliage in order for the disease to occur. Turf stressed from low fertility, especially nitrogen deficient turf is more susceptible. Excessive thatch also contributes to disease development.

Management: Cultural practices which help to reduce the occurrence and severity of the disease include:

- Maintain appropriate fertility levels.
- Follow proper irrigation practices.
- Avoid watering at night.
- Avoid light, frequent watering.
- Reduce thatch.
- Aerate compacted soils.
- Promote good air circulation.
- Maintain turf at the tallest height recommended for the grass species.
- Fungicides can offer protection against disease.