

Cercospora Leaf Spot

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Pathogen

Cercospora fusimaculans

Turfgrasses Affected

St. Augustinegrass

Occurrence

This disease is observed between late spring and the summer seasons, especially during periods of frequent rainfall. Areas of St. Augustinegrass that are under cultural or environmental stresses are more susceptible to disease development. Areas of turf under low fertility or sub-optimal light conditions seem to develop this disease.

Symptoms/Signs

Initial symptoms are narrow, dark brown leaf spots that enlarge over time into oblong to irregularly shaped lesions with dark tan centers and dark brown to purple margins (Figure 1). Under humid conditions, the abundant sporulation of the pathogen in the lesion centers may confer a whitish sheen to the spots.

Numerous spots on multiple leaves can cause extensive yellowing and withering of the canopy. This disease is very similar in pattern on the lawn and symptoms to that of gray leaf spot, but management is very different.

Cultural Controls

Prevent the disease by fertilizing ad-

equately, using slow-release nitrogen sources balanced with potassium, preferably a slow-release potassium form. Examine the irrigation cycle for timing, frequency and amount. Time irrigation so as not to extend the dew period (between 2 and 8 AM). Water only when the turf exhibits moisture stress. Avoid daily, frequent irrigation cycles that promote foliar disease.

If *Cercospora* leaf spot is already present, the disease can be managed with the application of quick release nitrogen in a fertilizer blend balanced with potassium (N:K ratio of 1:1). Apply ½ pound N per 1000 square feet utilizing an ammonium nitrate, ammonium sulfate or quick release urea formulation.

Where this disease is persistent, choice of St. Augustinegrass cultivars derived from 'bitter blue' types offer more resistance to this disease.

Chemical Controls

chlorothalonil, mancozeb, myclobutanil, thiophanate methyl, or triadimefon.

Mancozeb can be applied to a residential lawn only by a professional pesticide applicator. Chlorothalonil cannot be applied to a residential lawn, but it can be applied to turfgrass in a business or industrial landscape.

Refer to "Turfgrass Disease Management" PPP-64 for explanations of chemical and cultural controls.



Figure 1. Cercospora Leaf Spot symptoms on St. Augustinegrass.