



Pest Watch

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Snow Mold Diseases

Late autumn is the time to think about snow mold control strategies. In doing so, it is important to think of your overall management program and how that will impact on snow mold diseases.

Many of the cultural practices that you might implement in the autumn may have severe impacts on snow molds in the spring. For example, it is important to avoid heavy nitrogen applications prior to the cessation of top growth to avoid the production of abundant succulent tissue going into winter. Best results are obtained if fertilizers are applied in the autumn after top growth ceases. It is equally important to reduce the amount of snow cover if at all practical and to prevent compaction of the snow cover on disease-prone areas. Maintaining low soil pH (<6.0) and balanced soil fertil-

ity is particularly important in reducing pink snow mold damage

Applications of composted materials have been shown to reduce both pink and gray snow mold damage in the spring. Applications to sensitive areas of between 10 and 200 lbs. per 1000 sq. ft. have been effective. Make sure composts are adequately stabilized and have an 'earthy' odor.

A number of fungicides are effective in suppressing snow mold diseases. However, many are systemic and should be applied before winter dormancy. To be effective, these fungicides need to be translocated throughout the plant. Contact fungicides such as PCNB may be applied to dormant turf.

ERIC NELSON,
DEPT. OF PLANT PATHOLOGY

Pythium Root Rot Disease

Over the past few years, Pythium root rot has become one of the more serious diseases affecting all turfgrass areas, but particularly golf course putting greens. Should conditions become favorable (temperatures between 40° and 50° F coupled with prolonged wet conditions), severe outbreaks are likely to occur from September through November. Early to mid-autumn is the time to make preventive fungicide applications.

For sites with a history of root rot problems, applications of Koban, Banol, or Aliette in mid-October to early November have proven effective in controlling the problem in the autumn, but also reducing damage the following spring. With the exception of Koban, fungicides should be applied prior to winter dormancy and all should be watered-in for the most effective control.

ERIC NELSON,
DEPT. OF PLANT PATHOLOGY



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20 Plant Science Building
Cornell University
Ithaca, NY 14853