

POWDERY MILDEW

GENERAL

Conditions that favor powdery mildew, do not favor quality turf production. Symptoms will often appear in the same areas of the lawn year after year.

Powdery mildew is most damaging in shady, protected areas where there is very little sunlight and poor air circulation.

Turf grasses infected with powdery mildew disease are a dull gray-white color and at first glance appear to be covered with dried soapy water.

Old grass blades are most susceptible to infection and, if the disease persists, will gradually fade to yellow and eventually wither and die. As plants lose their ability to function properly, the turf slowly becomes thin and open.

CAUSES

In the spring, when conditions are favorable, spores are carried by the wind to grass leaves. They germinate in a few hours and develop appendages that penetrate the leaf surface. Heavy fungus (mycelium) on the leaves are a direct result from the disease's reproductive process.

Symptoms of the disease occur frequently during cloudy weather or in damp areas. Since it thrives in dry weather, it will increase progressively through summer and into fall. In the fall microscopic sacks of spores are produced to help ensure disease preservation for another year.

WHAT TO DO

Although often regarded as mere nuisance, powdery mildew often can indicate an area of poor quality turf production.

Its whitish cast can cover grass blades in increasing amounts for an entire growing season.

Many times the trimming of trees will allow enough sunlight and beneficial breezes to remedy the problem.

Where buildings and fences are the cause of the problem, a switch from turf to shade-tolerant ground covers (such as hostas) or cover material (such as wood chips or stones) will be more practical.

Please do contact us if you would like further recommendations.