How to Identify Red Thread Lawn Disease

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OVERVIEW

What Is Red Thread?



Red Thread (Laetisaria fuciformis) is a fungal lawn disease that causes unsightly growth and discoloration among turf grasses, but that is typically not fatal to the grass plants themselves. This disease produces thread-like growths on and around your turf but does not infect the roots or crowns of the grass.

Appearance



The threads or tendrils that grow atop red thread-infected turf grasses are called sclerotia. These threads are red or pink in color and give the disease its name. The condition is usually visible with the naked eye, although there are other lawn diseases with a similar appearance including dollar spot, pink patch, and pink snow mold. By taking a closer look at the infected grass, you will be able to identify Red Thread by the distinctive red or pink threads (sclerotia) or the small, pink, cottony puffs (mycelia) that can also form at the tips of leaves.

Effects of Red Thread Fungus Disease

When Red Thread infects a grass plant, blighted spots may appear on the leaves of grass as quickly as two days. These spots will appear on the leaves, stems, and leaf sheaths of the plant, but do not infect the roots or crown (the base of each grass plant from which it grows) and may not always cause plant death.

During drier days within its livable season and conditions, a Red Thread disease outbreak will often result in the dying off and

fading in color of most afflicted blades of grass. Infected grass blades may appear in patches or more randomly intermixed with healthy grass, depending on the spread of the disease. Infected patches of grass will usually be circular in shape on the lawn.

In more humid climates, turf blade death is less likely, and the infected turf plants will soon produce the signature red or pink tendrils or threads or cottony mycelia from their tops. These more visible signs are the clearest indicator that you are looking at Red Thread lawn disease. Check our following page on How to Treat Red Thread for DIY treatment tips.

Check out our red thread inspection guide to learn more about how to spot Red Thread disease on your lawn.