

HOME GROUNDS FACT SHEET

CORNELL

Cooperative Extension
Nassau County



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Anthracnose on Turfgrass



Anthracnose is a devastating summertime disease of lawns on Long Island. The disease, caused by the fungus *Colletotrichum graminicola*, is most evident during hot, droughty periods. Symptoms include an initial yellowing or reddening of the grass blades, which then quickly turn tan and eventually brown. The symptoms appear rapidly during droughty conditions on stressed lawns. The entire lawn can become infected and turn brown. If you look at the brown blades with a microscope, hand lens or a good magnifying lens, you can see small black/brown fruiting bodies that have tiny

spines sticking out of them. This confirms that Anthracnose is the culprit.

Anthracnose can infect Kentucky bluegrass, annual bluegrass, perennial ryegrass, tall fescue, fine fescue, bentgrass and zoysia. The disease occurs between April and October. The grass may be brown in irregularly shaped reddish-brown patches or widespread throughout the lawn.

Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Considerations

IPM is a common sense approach to pest control and plant care. It employs a number of measures to prevent, control or reduce plant problems. These include using resistant plant varieties, proper plant selection and placement, good aftercare and biological and/or mechanical controls. As a last resort, after all other remedies have been explored, a pesticide* that is least toxic to people and natural predators, can be considered. Prior to using any pesticides, plants should always be monitored for the degree of infestation and a

sensible control measure considered.

* A pesticide is a substance that kills, or attempts to kill, a particular pest, e.g. **insecticide**, **fungicide**, **herbicide**, etc.

Cultural Control

Invitations to anthracnose include dry soil, wet turf canopy and high atmospheric moisture. It is also favored by a low population of soil microbes. Therefore, an increase in the use of organic material is called for. Adequate moisture and soil fertility are also important. When fertilizing, use a complete fertilizer that contains nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium. Fertilizers should not be applied during periods of drought or prolonged periods of hot weather.

Chemical Control

When the cultural conditions have been met and the disease still appears to be spreading, the application of a fungicide may be necessary.

Chemical pesticides are available. If you choose to use chemical pesticides, contact your local Cooperative Extension office for specific recommendations.

For **Certified Pesticide Operators** (CPOs), pesticide information may be found in Cornell Recommendations for Turf for the current year.

WHENEVER YOU USE A PESTICIDE,
ALWAYS READ THE LABEL AND FOLLOW
THE MANUFACTURER'S INSTRUCTIONS
AND RECOMMENDATIONS.

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