

# Lawn Disease Problems

## Rust

1. **Have you noticed rust coloured powder or dust on your shoes after walking on the lawn?**
2. **Are the leaves of the turf reddish or light orange in colour?**
3. **Have you noticed it mainly in the summer or early winter?**

**If you can answer 'yes' to the above, then you probably have rust disease.**

Rust Diseases in turf grasses, are some of the oldest diseases known to attack turfed lawns. They can only attack live grass, and are more than capable of killing the leaves, but not normally the whole plant. The fungi that cause rust disease, cannot grow in your soil. They are simply pathogens. For the rust disease to develop in your lawn, the weather must be wet and warm, and the grass must be slightly under fertilised. Rust only attacks the leaf of the turf.

You may notice the rust coloured leaves, may develop some black deposit powder on the surface in late autumn. This is the same fungus, but is preparing for winter.

### Control of Rust

1. Turf needs to be fertilised with a good quality feed
2. Lawns should be cut properly ([see](#) Lawn master operative for advice)
3. Lawns need to be well aired and have reasonable drainage
4. Fungicide applications ([see](#) Lawn master operative)

Please note

Fungicides are a toxin and are only used by Lawn Master when absolutely necessary. Prevention is always better than cure. If you are having your lawns treated by a professional company other than Lawn Master, make sure that you ask what preventive methods they employ, against disease and foliar blights.

# Red thread

A fungus that lives in the turf causes Red Thread disease. Most turf has fungus of some kind in it, but normally you do not see the fungus or disease that it causes. During conditions of high humidity or wet periods, red thread may appear. In the beginning, you may notice small patches of grass leaves turning brown or pinkish in colour, starting to die. A few days later, on closer examination, you may notice red, thin threads in the pink patches. This is in fact the fungus.

This fungus can be spread by your lawn mower. Turf containing rye grass can be more susceptible, but it can be found on all species of turf grass in the U.K. Red thread in a lawn should be checked and treated before it becomes a major problem, and starts killing patches of turf.

## Control of Red Thread

1. Turf needs to be fertilised properly throughout the season, with a quality balanced feed, and not pure nitrogen.
2. If used repeatedly on a lawn, feeds containing high nitrogen content will cause a slight addiction problem to the grass. Red Thread Disease can be grown out with higher nitrogen feeds in some instances, but not if it is continually being fed with it anyway. This is similar to the problem with over-use of antibiotics from your doctor. Eventually, you become immune to the effects of them and they become useless. Too much use of very high nitrogen feeds can do more harm than good. (See Fertiliser Knowledge)
3. Fungicides can be used to destroy this fungus.
4. Mow your lawns properly.

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# Fusarium Patch Disease

This is identified as yellow to brown areas of turf. It is mainly found in autumn, but can also be found at other times of the year. You may notice a whitish coloured mould that develops on the affected areas.

To confirm that you have infected turf areas, cover the areas with a dark cloth or bag, and inspect the following day, and you can normally spot the growth of mould.

The incubation period for this disease is very short, and turf can become infected with most lawn diseases very quickly. Lawn Master check for any signs of disease at every visit we make, and we may alter your feed, dependent on what we find in your lawn.

## Control of Fusarium Patch

1. Turf will need to be fed with a quality, balanced feed. Trace elements are also recommended.
2. High nitrogen feeds cause problems if they are used too late into autumn. Make sure your lawns are not over-fed with polymer-coated feeds in late summer. These feeds have unpredictable time-release scales, and can and often do, release well into autumn, releasing higher levels of nitrogen. (See Fertiliser Knowledge)
3. Make sure the soil is well aerated.
4. Fungicide applications can be applied.
5. Mow your lawns properly.

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# **Brown patches**

**Brown patches in turf can be caused by a variety of problems, from foliar pathogens, fungi that attack the turf, to dry patch in the sub-surface soil layers. While Lawn Master can identify the particular fungus that is attacking the grass, it is not normally necessary for the purpose of control.**

Foliar fungi attack virtually every turf grass grown in the U.K., and they are very common. All of these disease problems can be cured in your turf, but prevention is better than cure.

## **Controlling Foliar Problems**

1. Mow your lawns properly. Do not let your grass grow too tall, as this holds more moisture, and disease grows in overly wet lawns.
2. Fertilise your lawn with balanced regular feeds.
3. Make sure your lawn drains well. Your lawn should be puddle free, 45 minutes after a heavy shower. If it isn't, aerate the lawn to relieve compaction.
4. Keep your lawn well aerated, at least once a year.
5. Application of fungicide.

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# Colour In Turf

In general, turf should be green. Shades of green will vary because of the different species of grass in the make up of the turf. By regular feeding of the lawn, the variance in colour can be reduced significantly.

It is important to understand that your lawn is dynamic and is constantly changing. Each change in the turf, is indicating a change in the environment and conditions. Most changes that the turf makes are harmless. However, other changes are a sign of danger for the plant, for example patches of dry and yellow colour indicate a problem with lack of water etc.

On each visit Lawn Master become familiar with your lawn, and the way it uniquely responds to some products and feeds that we use. We also keep a record of what products have been used, as we alter the feed applications from one lawn to another. We do not use the same feed on every lawn.

## What do different colours mean

1. **Deep green** Chlorophyll in the leaf reflects a green colour. Normally, the darker the colour, the more nitrogen, iron or magnesium is present.
2. **Yellowing** Carotenoids are pigments that reflect yellow colours. Although they are always present in the leaf, you normally only notice when there is a deficiency in the above.
3. **Red** Again, Anthocyanins are natural pigments in the grass leaf, and reflect red and blues. This is usually a problem when the chlorophyll content is low. If you can spot red tinges to the leaf, it may also be a disease problem as mentioned earlier.
4. Stress from any disease can also cause higher levels of pigment in the grass.
5. **Orange colours** Pigment that reflects orange colours is usually a disease problem such as Rust or Fungi. If you notice an orange colour in your lawn, please call Lawn Master to investigate it before the problem gets any worse.
6. **Tan or Brown** Straw-coloured blades of grass are normally dead areas. Your lawn may from time to time have some slight areas of light brown coloured strands of grass. However, if you notice a large area of turf turning tan or brown in colour, there is usually a cause. Please call Lawn Master for an analysis of the problem.

## **Fungi and Toadstools**

Fungi are very common in grass. They go hand in hand with the biological process of decomposing elements, and breakdown of materials. Toadstools degrade and recycle dead plant material, and are very common in an ornamental lawn. They are neither problematic or a major hassle. Toadstools show that you have an active soil, and that activity is reasonably good. However, you should take care to watch the thatch level. Your lawn may need scarification to reduce this dead layer.

Also, there may be a layer of decaying debris under the lawn area, from previous building work or dead tree stumps and tree roots. If your lawn has a major problem with mushrooms and toadstools, ask your Lawn Master representative about the best way to stop this problem recurring.

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