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**NEWS RELEASE FROM THE OFFICE OF:**

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**Brown Patch**

What a great spring we are having with the good rains we have had the last several weeks. One of the major problems we visit with people about in the Extension Office is home lawn problems. The wet conditions, high humidity and cooler temperatures makes ideal conditions for the fungus brown patch.

Brown patch can be a serious threat to most turfgrasses. With the slightly cooler temperatures and wet conditions, brown patch presents a challenge to the homeowner as well as the professional turf manager.

Conditions most favorable for brown patch development include (1) the presence of active fungi, (2) vigorous growth of a susceptible grass, (3) daytime temperature ranges between 75 and 85 F, (4) the presence of free moisture on the foliage, and (5) night temperatures below 68 F.

On warm season turfgrasses, the disease is characterized by at least two different types of symptoms. The most common symptom is a circular pattern of brown grass with a yellowish colored ring ("smoke ring") of wilted grass at the perimeter of the diseased area. The leaves can be easily pulled from the stolons within the "smoke ring" because the fungus destroys the tissue at the base of the leaf sheath. Symptoms first appear as small circular patches of water-soaked, dark grass that soon wilt and turn light brown. Stolons often remain green. As the disease develops, the circular patches enlarge, "smoke rings" become more apparent and new green leaves may emerge in the center of the circular areas.

Nitrogen fertility has a significant impact on brown patch development. High nitrogen levels promote the growth of soft, succulent leaves that are susceptible to attack by the brown patch fungus. To help prevent disease outbreaks, apply a low rate of nitrogen fertilizer at four to six week intervals or use a slow release nitrogen fertilizer. Also maintain phosphorous and potash

fertility levels according to soil test recommendations.

Moisture also plays an important role in disease development. Good drainage is needed to remove excess water. The lawn should be irrigated in the morning. Never irrigate lawns late in the evening. Outbreaks of brown patch are usually too sporadic, especially on home lawns, to justify a preventive fungicide. A number of fungicides are recommended for brown patch control. The fungicides are most effective when used as soon as the disease appears or when conditions are favorable for disease development as compared to their use after the disease has become well established. Use a preventive on lawns that have previously been affected by the disease. Apply the fungicides only when conditions favor the development of the disease. The time interval between applications of fungicides can vary from 10 to 21 days, depending on the fungicide selected. Always read and follow the label directions. In order for the product to work correctly, the proper amount of chemical must be used. On home lawns, a fungicide spray program should begin as soon as symptoms appear and continue until the turf starts to recover or weather conditions no longer favor the spread of the disease.

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