

Turfgrass Disease Profiles

Slime Molds

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Slime molds can occur on any species of turfgrass but are most common in taller mown turf. Despite their threatening appearance, slime molds are not infectious and will not result in anything more than temporary cosmetic damage. Slime molds will not harm humans, pets, or livestock.

The most common slime mold species is *Physarum cinereum*, a primitive microorganism that can grow and multiply on leaf and stem surfaces. Outbreaks are normally brief, lasting one or two weeks, and coincide with wet weather and high levels of organic matter.

Initial signs of slime mold include colorful, well-defined patches on turf (Figures 1 and 2). Colors may range from yellow and orange to purple and gray. The mold actually represents masses of spores (Figure 3). Rain and maintenance practices may disperse these spores. The bright colored mold usually appears for only a few days before it turns gray or black (Figure 4). Usually, by the time the color changes, the wet mold begins to turn dry and powdery.

Because slime molds are not infectious, and remain for only short periods of time, no lasting harm to turf will occur. No fungicides or other chemical treatments are necessary for control. Affected areas can be hosed with water to wash the fungus from plant surfaces. Also, raking will break up the mold (especially during dry weather) and hasten its disappearance and the return to a more attractive turf stand.



Figure 1



Figure 2



Figure 3

- Gray Snow Mold
- Pink Snow Mold
- Leaf Spot/Melting Out
- Red Thread
- Dollar Spot
- Brown Patch
- Gray Leaf Spot
- Anthracnose
- Pythium Blight
- Leaf Rust
- Powdery Mildew
- Slime Molds**
- Fairy Ring
- Take All Patch
- Summer Patch
- Necrotic Ring Spot
- Rhizoctonia Large Patch
- Yellow Patch
- Smut Diseases





Figure 4

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All photos by Richard Latin.

