

# Heat Tracks



Have you ever noticed brown parallel lines in a yard that look like they are caused by something driving on it? The question is whether the damage was from mowing or a fertilizer application. Sometimes I've seen it from both, but the key is it's not usually from the fertilizer, but actually from the equipment that is being used to spread the fertilizer. The damage occurs when the turf is starting to wilt and any traffic is put on the turf. Anything you drive over the turf when it is wilting will cause heat track damage. The condition of the turf is the main key to the cause of the tracks forming. When a lawn is entering drought stress, it may still be green, but the stress is already starting. The weight of the machine riding over the lawn bends the leaf blade and breaks the leaf blade. The leaf blade is no longer able to stay green and it turns brown as it dies off

A machine riding on the lawn can cause this problem, but the machine can be as light as a push mower, or even someone walking on it. The good news is that if temperatures remain relatively cool and the turf receives water, it will grow out of the damage within a couple weeks. The crown of the grass plant is still intact. The crown is where the grass leaf blades originate from. The broken leaf blades will stay brown, but new leaf blades will grow around it, eventually making the tracks disappear. The best way to avoid heat tracks in the future is to maintain a lawn that is not drought stressed. Proper watering will help to maintain a healthy turf stand and avoid having heat tracks develop in the future. We try to keep our equipment off when the turf takes on the blue/gray wilt appearance to prevent tracks from forming.

