

Leaf Spot



The causal fungi usually first invade the leaves, producing small brown spots. As the disease worsens, the spots on leaf blades expand and produce a dark purplish-red oval border around a tan center. The spots enlarge until the entire width of the leaf blade is blighted. The leaf-spotting or leaf-blighting phase is less damaging to the turfgrass than is the melting-out (crown and root-rot) phase of the diseases. In melting-out, the crowns and roots are damaged, causing severe thinning of the turf. Not all leaf spot diseases are spring problems. During summer, leaf spotting fungi can attack nearly every grass species. Certain cultivars of Kentucky bluegrass, perennial ryegrass, bentgrasses, tall fescue, and fine fescues are susceptible. It is very difficult to predict when the symptoms will be most severe. In most Kentucky bluegrass turfs, however, mid- to late-spring is the time of greatest activity and damage. Leaf spot can become evident when temperatures reach 70° F (21.1° C). The disease is most severe when temperatures are above 90° F and humidity is high. Conditions of drought stress followed by rewetting intensify the disease.

