

Rust



Rust appears as an orange or yellowish-orange powder (spores) on grass leaf blades. Overall, the turf may assume a yellow, red, or brown appearance. Close examination will reveal the pustules, which easily rub off on your hand. Rust spores can easily be tracked into homes. Rust diseases commonly occur in late summer when lawns are somewhat stressed by summer weather combined with shorter day length. Cloudy days and high humidity—alternating with sunny days, high humidity and high temperatures—promote the formation and spread of lawn rust. Rust typically develops on lawns and other turf areas growing very slowly. Low fertility (in particular nitrogen) and low water availability slow down turf growth, allowing rust to develop. Seasons with excess rain may have rust outbreaks due to depletion of available nitrogen. Cool nights with heavy dew and light, frequent rainfall add to the ideal conditions for rust to develop. Rust also occurs more frequently in lawns with poor soil. In most situations, the disease may be present but not detected without closer examination. Rust on turfgrass can discolor a lawn if the turfgrass is heavily infected, but rust disease does not permanently damage the turf and a fungicide application is not necessary.

