

# Snow Mold



Gray snow mold affects all cool season turfgrass species in areas where there are extended periods of snow cover. In areas without prolonged snow cover, gray snow mold damage to turf is largely cosmetic. Gray snow mold requires snow cover for infection and patch development. Some pathogen activity occurs in the fall during periods of cool, wet weather. The extent of actual infection in fall is not clear. Since turf damage associated with infection and disease progress is favored by cold (32°F to 36°F), wet conditions, extended periods of snow cover provide ideal conditions for snow mold establishment and spread. On taller mown turf, matted grass blades may provide a similar insulating environment, but outbreaks normally are not severe without prolonged snow cover.

The pink snow mold pathogen may be active over a broad temperature range (30°F to 60°F), so infection may occur in fall and spring as well as winter. Unlike gray snow mold, snow cover is not necessary for extensive pink snow mold infection. However the insulating effect of the snow as well as long matted turf (the result of lush fall growth), extend the duration of temperatures that are favorable for disease development. The phase of the disease that occurs without snow cover is often called Microdochium patch. All cool season turfgrass species are susceptible to pink snow mold infection.

Fungicide applications for snow mold control are not recommended for home lawns. From a distance, pink snow mold symptoms on residential lawns are very similar to gray snow mold symptoms. Cultural control options remain the same for both snow mold diseases on lawns and are intended to limit the duration of environmental conditions that favor snow mold infection and/or encourage turf recovery in the spring. Rake and mow lawns through the fall to prevent the insulating effects of matted grass and accumulated leaves, avoid piling snow on the same side of driveways and walkways through the winter, and rake affected areas in the spring to help aerate the grass and hasten turf recovery as temperatures increase.

