



Spring Dead Spot

› Causal Agent: *Leptosphaeria korrae*

› Susceptible Turfgrass

Common couch grass, South African couch grass and their hybrids.

› Symptoms

- Circular patches of bleached, straw coloured dead grass appear in Spring as the dormant grass resumes growth.
- Patches are also visible in Autumn and Winter after a series of unusually cool days or wet, cold weather.
- Patches are a few centimetres to 1m in diameter.
- Patches reappear and expand in the same spot for 3 or more years.
- After 2 to 3 years, the centres of active patches may remain alive, and the patch takes on a “ringlike” appearance.
- Rings that coalesce can appear as serpentine arcs.
- Roots of affected plants turn dark brown to black and are severely rotted.
- Regrowth of grass into affected patches is slow and patches may remain barren or fill with weeds.
- When the grass recolonises an affected area it remains stunted.

› Conditions Favouring Disease

- Most active when temperatures are cool (12 to 14°C) and soil is moist.
- Roots of Couch grow most rapidly at 24 to 29°C and extremely slowly at 15°C, thus the fungus has a competitive advantage at low temperatures.
- Spring Dead Spot favours cool, wet weather in the spring and autumn and daily temperatures of less than 15°C.
- This disease is typically found where thatch is more than 1.2cm thick and in locations with poor drainage and low potassium levels.
- Heavy applications of nitrogen in late summer often increase disease severity the following spring.
- Spring Dead Spot is more severe on turf that is over three-years old and in locations with long dormancy and cold temperatures.



› Management Tips

- Preventative systemic fungicide applications.
- Good fertiliser management especially nitrogen and potassium.
- Control weeds in affected turf to enhance recovery from Spring Dead Spot.
- Apply moderate to high levels of phosphorous, potash and minor elements.
- Improve drainage of turf.
- Reduce thatch.

› General Comments

Spring Dead Spot is typically a disease of mature turfs that are intensively managed.

› Distribution

Found in all states of Australia.