



J&L Garden Center

*The All Season Gift
and Garden Center*

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Lawn Disease Prevention

Preventing lawn diseases is much easier than curing and controlling lawn diseases.

Lawn diseases are much harder to cure than killing lawn insects. Some lawn diseases may persist for several years before you can get them completely under control. Timing is one of the most critical factors. You have to apply the fungicide at the correct stage of the disease development for it to have any impact on the disease. You must also re-apply fungicides, sometimes several times a year and for several years in a row.



Prevention is much easier than the control of many lawn diseases. Sometimes the best way to prevent the development of bad bacteria or fungus in your lawn is by introducing, or stimulating, beneficial bacteria to grow in the soil. An easy way to introduce beneficial bacteria is by using an organic fertilizer. An easy way to stimulate beneficial bacteria already in the soil is by applying humic acid.



Dr. Earth Lawn Fertilizer is an organic fertilizer that contains many beneficial bacteria which can help your lawn grow much better than by just using normal chemical fertilizers. A side benefit is that some of these beneficial bacteria may also help to eliminate many harmful bacteria and prevent fungus problems. Unfortunately, organic controls are often much slower at getting rid of existing problems than chemical controls are. However, they are very helpful in preventing lawn diseases and usually give excellent long term control, once you get your lawn disease under control - eliminating the need for future chemical controls.



The best way to control many lawn diseases is to prevent them from starting in the first place. A few excellent preventative measures are:

☐ Be Careful so you don't unknowingly spread lawn diseases. Many lawn diseases are spread by walking from an infected area into another area. Lawn mowers, golf shoes, dogs, and neighborhood baseball games also may spread lawn disease organism from one location to another. If you know there is a lawn disease in one area of your yard, be sure to wash your shoes or lawnmower before entering the rest of the lawn. Always remove golf shoes. Golf courses have the same problems as homeowners in controlling diseases.



☐ Plant several different varieties of grass in your lawn. If one variety is susceptible to a certain disease, the other varieties may be resistant to it. Buy the newer hybrid varieties rather than the older, cheaper varieties of grass seed. It will save you money in the long run.

☐ Water correctly. Too much water near the surface is one reason that lawn diseases start to develop. Contrary to an old wife's tale, watering at night does not necessarily create disease problems. However, too much water close to the surface can create many unnecessary problems that may lead to a lawn disease problem.

☐ Water needs to penetrate to a depth of 6" to 12". Water your lawn for a longer period of time and less frequently during the spring, summer and fall. Aerate deeply, and do it as often as needed, to help water penetrate into the soil and not just run off. Check the depth of water penetration several times during the summer to make sure your lawn is receiving the necessary water. You can buy a lawn areator that attaches directly to a hose, or you can attach a pipe to a hose, to help get water deep into the soil.

☐ Poor drainage can be just as bad for a lawn as too much water. Roots need oxygen to grow. If the soil does not drain, there is not any oxygen in the soil for the roots to use. This condition can make a lawn more susceptible to a disease.

☐ Apply Humic Acid every year or two. Sometimes the best control for harmful bacteria is to promote beneficial bacteria, already in the soil, to multiply faster.

☐ Use a fertilizer high in sulphur. Sulphur is an excellent fungicide.

☐ Fertilize with extra iron every few years. Extra iron promotes healthy grass blades.

☐ Over-seed with varieties of grass that are not susceptible to that particular disease. Use the newer varieties of Kentucky bluegrass such as the Magic Carpet Mix or the Necrotic Ringspot resistant varieties. You may need to use **Perennial Rye Grass** or **Hard Fescue Grass** instead of the traditional **Kentucky Bluegrass**, if you have an extreme disease problem in your yard.



☐ Fertilize with an organic base fertilizer that supplies beneficial bacteria to the soil, such as **Dr. Earth Lawn Food**. Use this organic fertilizer at least once or twice a year for best results. Some homeowners have switched to Dr. Earth Lawn Food exclusively for their lawn's fertilizer needs, it provides excellent results.

Lawn Disease Cure

Different lawn diseases may need different chemicals to control them. 'One-size-fits-all' does not apply to lawn disease control. Each fungicide is specific for certain types of diseases.



If you need help diagnosing which disease your lawn may have, bring in sample for us to look at. Bring in a 6" piece of lawn, with about 2" of soil and roots. We need to see both the blades of grass and look at the root system and soil. Some diseases are actually in the soil and roots, not in the leaves.



The sample needs to be taken at the edge of the diseased area. We need to see a sample that has both good and diseased grasses next to each other. We cannot diagnose what is wrong with grass that is completely dead.

After you determine which lawn disease you are trying to control, make sure you apply the proper fungicide at the correct time and repeat as often as recommended by the fungicide's label.

Steps for applying lawn disease controls.

1. Make sure your lawn is moist and that the soil is moist to a depth of 4" to 8" deep. One method to moisten the area is by using a pipe that you can attach to the hose. Another method to help moisten the soil is to use liquid dish soap as a "wetting agent". Mix five to ten tablespoons of dish soap per gallon of water. (The cheapest dish soaps are usually the best ones to use as a wetting agent. Do not use detergent.) 'Wet' the area thoroughly an hour or two before applying lawn disease controls. You can either use a bucket to apply the dish soap solution or you can use a hose end sprayer.

2. Apply the lawn fungicide to the entire area affected plus a large area around the diseased area. If you have several affected areas in the 'front lawn', treat the entire 'front lawn' the first time you apply your fungicide. You may not need to apply the fungicide to the 'back lawn'.



3. Repeat the application of your lawn fungicide as often as recommended on the fungicide label. You do not necessarily need to treat the entire 'front lawn' during the follow up treatments, but be sure to treat the affected areas plus a large area around each diseased area.

4. Apply **Humate, (Humic Acid)** to the entire lawn. Repeat this application of **Humate** each fall and spring for the next four or five years. Humate helps stimulate disease resistance by increasing plant vigor. Humate also helps to eliminate a thatch buildup, which can be a major factor in lawn diseases.



5. Next time you need to fertilize your lawn (do not fertilize your lawn during the heat of summer), use an organic base fertilizer instead of a chemical fertilizer. Use **Dr. Earth Lawn Food** or **Milorganite Fertilizer**. Fertilize your lawn with an organic fertilizer at least once a year for the next four or five years.



6. Rake and remove the dead grass so you can over-seed the area later in the fall, as soon as the weather starts to cool. If your lawn is Kentucky Blue grass, use a mixture of several different varieties of Kentucky Bluegrass that are resistant to as many diseases as possible, such as **Magic Carpet Kentucky Bluegrass**, or **Necrotic Ringspot Resistant Mix**. Over-seed a large area around the dead area so the grass will blend in with the rest of your lawn.

You may need to over-seed your lawn with different kinds of grasses, such as Perennial Ryegrass, or Fescue, instead of using the traditional Kentucky Bluegrass varieties. These grasses are not as susceptible to many of the common diseases that Kentucky Bluegrass seems to get. However, other varieties of grass have a different color and a different texture than Kentucky Blue grass, so you may need to overseed your entire lawn to avoid a patchy look, or a color variation in your lawn.

