Dollar Spot

Causal Agent
- *Clarireedia jacksonii* (previously *Sclerotinia homoeocarpa*)

Disease Common Names
- Dollar spot

Background Information
Dollar spot is a common disease of turf and is one of the most destructive in North America. Symptoms of dollar spot appear as straw-coloured circular patches measuring 2.5 to 5.0 cm in diameter. In moist environmental conditions, white aerial mycelial growth can be observed on turf foliage, especially in the morning. Symptoms of dollar spot can often be confused with copper spot and early symptoms of brown patch and Pythium blight.

Conducive Environment
Dollar spot thrives in warm, humid weather conditions that create dew and cause prolonged leaf wetness. It is exacerbated by drought stress, poor air circulation, low nitrogen, and incorrect mowing frequency or low cutting height. Dollar spot survives unfavourable periods in infected leaf tissue and plant debris as dormant mycelium, or as stromata in the thatch. The pathogen becomes active in spring when temperatures exceed 15°C with increased humidity, but infections decrease in summer with temperatures above 30°C. Hyphae infect grass blades through wounds and natural openings such as stomata. Mycelium can be transmitted to nearby plants through contact, traffic, water, or wind.

Susceptible Hosts
Most warm- and cool-season turfgrass species are susceptible to dollar spot although another species, *C. monteithiana* is more common on warm-season grasses. This disease is commonly found on golf course greens and fairways where the turf is maintained at low mowing heights.

Appearance
Dollar spot patches are characteristic in that they rarely exceed 5 cm diameter on closely mowed turfgrass. The patches can be as large as 15 cm on taller, longer cut turf. The white, cottony, aerial mycelium is most commonly observed on the edges of patches early in the morning when dew is present. In severe cases, dollar spot patches can coalesce into larger diffuse areas of blighted turf. On longer grass, individual grass blades may exhibit straw-coloured lesions with reddish-brown edges. If the lesion extends across the width of the leaf blade, the centre of the lesion may appear sunken leading to an “hourglass” shape.
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Management Strategies

**Cultural Management**

The two main cultural controls for dollar spot are maintaining turf health and reducing moisture on the foliage. The pathogen causing dollar spot thrives on a combination of plant stress and prolonged leaf wetness, so any practices that decrease these conditions will lead to suppression of dollar spot.

Consistent, light applications of nitrogen will improve the health of the turfgrass, help to grow out symptoms, and speed up recovery. Reducing leaf wetness can be achieved by increasing airflow and sun exposure, watering deeply and infrequently, avoiding irrigation in the evening, and removing dew by mowing, rolling, or poling in the morning. Selecting more resistant turfgrass cultivars is also a suggested practice. Consult a professional agronomist or refer to the National Turfgrass Evaluation Program (NTEP) website and select a trial that is similar to your specific climate.

**Chemical Management**

For a complete list of pesticides for dollar spot, please refer to OMAFRA Publication 384: Protection Guide for Turfgrasses. Fungicide resistance in dollar spot has been a persistent issue so it is crucial that multiple fungicides with different modes of actions are used in an optimized IPM plan.


Be sure to follow all integrated pest management guidelines as well as local, provincial, and federal regulations when using pesticides.

**Other Controls & Considerations**

There are few, if any, proven alternative controls for dollar spot. Introducing improved or resistant cultivars or less susceptible species in high-risk areas should be considered.

Beware that adding nitrogen to manage dollar spot in warm autumns could result in lush growth and delayed dormancy leading into winter. This could result in other problems such as an increased risk of Microdochium patch, grey snow mould, or winter damage.