

# PLANT DISEASE CONTROL NOTES

EXTENSION DIVISION • VIRGINIA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE AND STATE UNIVERSITY

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*Lawn Diseases*

Control Series 58

## RED LEAF SPOT OF BENTGRASSES

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Red leaf spot is caused by the fungus *Helminthosporium erythrospilum*. The disease occurs only on red top and the bentgrasses.

SYMPTOMS.- Leaf spots are circular to ovular, straw-colored, and surrounded by reddishbrown borders. On occasion, the characteristic lighter-colored centers may be either extremely minute or entirely absent. During periods of prolonged, wet weather, many of the spots may be further surrounded by a belt of water-soaked tissue. Under conditions favorable for disease development, spots may overlap, thus giving the affected area a reddish cast.

Heavy infections is often accompanied by withering of the leaves. As the result, an over-all view of a diseased stand of bentgrass may give a drought-stricken appearance, even though soil moisture has been adequate for plant growth.

DISEASE CYCLE.- A warm, wet-weather disease, red leaf spot is usually first seen in late May or early June. With the advent of warmer weather, disease severity increases and usually reaches its peak in late July and August. The leaf blighting and "drought-stricken" phase of the disease usually occurs during this period--particularly after long periods of wet weather.

The pathogen overwinters as dormant fungus threads in infected plants and infested debris from the previous year's growth.

CONTROL.- Resistant Varieties - All commonly grown varieties of bentgrass appear to be equally susceptible to red leaf spot.

Chemical Control - Red leaf spot may be controlled by the use of certain fungicides. For most effective control, spray 1,000 sq. ft. with 4 gal. water containing either 4 oz. (22 tablespoons) Acti-dione-Thiran, OR 4-6 oz. (15-23 tablespoons) Captan 50% WP, OR 4 oz. (22 tablespoons) Daconil 2787 75% WP, OR 4-6 oz. (19-28 tablespoons) Dyrene 50% WP, OR 4 oz. (14 tablespoons) Fore 80% WP, OR 4 oz. (18 tablespoons) Dithane 2-78 50% WP. For optimum control, the fungicide applications should be made at 7-14 day intervals during periods of disease outbreak.

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**KEYS TO PROPER USE OF PESTICIDES**

1. Read the label on each pesticide container before each use. Follow instructions to the letter; heed all cautions and warnings, and note precautions about residues.
2. Keep pesticides in the containers in which you bought them. Put them where children or animals cannot get to them, preferably under lock and away from food, feed, seed, or other material that may become harmful if contaminated.
3. Dispose of empty containers in the manner specified on the label.

**SEE YOUR DOCTOR IF SYMPTOMS OF ILLNESS OCCUR DURING OR AFTER USE OF PESTICIDES.**