

ORGANIC GARDENING SOLUTIONS

KEEPING BROWN PATCH AT BAY

By Mark Bowen

I am still running across a large number of folks that are battling brown patch in their St. Augustine lawns. Here are some tips to minimize the damage and increase the chances for recovery:

- 1) Stop watering the lawn until spring to avoid creating ideal conditions for brown patch (particularly wet soils with less oxygen during cool night periods).
- 2) Avoid fertilizing Brown Patch affected areas with nitrogen rich fertilizers until spring since nitrogen tends to fuel the spread of Brown Patch.
- 3) For diseased lawn areas that are not low, consider sprinkling 1/4-1/2 inch of leaf mold compost over the lawn. This topdressing will introduce beneficial microbes known to fight the fungus that causes Brown Patch. The compost will also improve the health and structure of the underlying soil thereby improving the chances of resisting Brown Patch in the future.
- 4) For low lying areas, think about using the product Actinovate. One packet of this product will treat up to 5000 square feet of lawn with beneficial microbes known to suppress Brown Patch. Next spring, consider re-grading low areas if possible so that water will spread out properly. As a result, your soils will be less likely to be oxygen deficient and Brown Patch prone.
- 5) Next spring, switch to Microlife 5-1-3 with Brown Patch Control for any areas with a history of Brown Patch to introduce extra microbes known to help fight off Brown Patch.
- 6) Avoid over-watering all year, especially during the lead up period to Brown Patch season (the tail end of summer right before the first cool front comes through).
- 7) Think about changing out affected lawn sections with tougher groundcovers if you run into a situation where Brown Patch is a perpetual problem no matter what you do.

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Brown Patch Disease Affecting St. Augustine Lawn