



Pythium Leaf Blight / Damping Off

› Causal Agent: *Pythium* spp.

› Susceptible Turfgrass

Cool and warm season turfgrass species.

› Symptoms

- Pythium Leaf Blight appears suddenly during hot, humid weather.
- Patches occur these patches can enlarge at a rapid rate.
- In the early morning, grass leaves appear water-soaked and dark in patches.
- When rubbed between the fingers, these water-soaked patches feel oily.
- Infected leaves become light tan to brown, shrivelled and matted when dry.
- When humidity remains high, especially at night, the collapsed leaves become matted and covered with a fluffy white mass of fungal mycelium.

› Conditions Favouring Disease

- Hot days (30-35°C), humid or rainy weather when night temperatures are warm (above 20°C).
- Relative humidity exceeding 90% for at least 14 hours and a minimum temperature not falling below 20°C.
- Lush, dense grass growing under high nitrogen fertility is especially susceptible to attack.
- Turf areas with poor drainage and air circulation.

› Management Tips

- When establishing a new area, provide for good surface and subsurface drainage.
- Avoid over-watering new plantings, and avoid watering late in the day.
- On established turf water early in the day.
- Water infrequently and deeply.
- Removal of excessive thatch.
- Do not over fertiliser turf with nitrogen.
- Avoid mowing during moist, hot weather.
- Promote good light penetration into the turf canopy.
- Increase air circulation to speed the drying process of the turf.



› General Comments

- Excessive moisture is required before *Pythium* spp. can cause extensive damage.
- Pythium may be more severe in alkaline soils than acidic soils.

› Distribution

Found in all states of Australia.