

Dry Patch

What is it?



You may notice a darkening halo on parts of the lawn, visible from the upstairs window. This is a good indicator that the soil underneath is starting to or has dried out. This little known phenomenon is not only related to drought conditions but even if you are watering the lawn on a regular basis all throughout the year, some areas will still never become wet naturally to a depth, thus promoting grass growth in these areas. The surface of these areas will become dry and crusty and thatchy and be void of grass that cannot grow without water.

Where has it come from?

The Drencher tablet is used to alleviate localised 'Dry Patch' areas on a lawn or grass area. These areas have appeared because the soil-acting bacteria have made the soil hydrophobic (repelling water) and until you can get these areas wet again, nothing will grow. A bit like trying to wet an old bathroom sponge, almost impossible. A by-product of their activity in breaking down thatch in the lawns surface is a waxy substance that coats the soil particles, thus preventing them absorbing available water. It is important to get the lawns surface wet to a depth and consistently even across the complete surface area of the lawn to aid uniform growth and colour and make treatments effective. The wetting agent or surfactant will reduce the surface tension of the water droplet and make water wetter making it easier to be absorbed into the soil and break down the waxy coating surrounding some of the soil particles. It is particularly good at reducing the activity of Fairy Rings by enabling you to get the soil in the immediate and not so immediate proximity of the fairy ring wet again. It is a liquid detergent that is safe to use on grass of a minimal salt content.

How do I apply a wetting agent to the lawn?



The problem requires your continued commitment. You will need one of the green and white hand held Miracle Grow Diluters or Westland Horticulture with a clean and empty reservoir. They are available from good DIY warehouses or garden centres for approx £5.00. The product that is in the container needs to be transferred to the Miracle Diluter to permit application to the grass. You may be able to scoop the product out with a spoon

if you have the Drencher Essential tablet, which is brown in colour or cut out if you have the standard tablet, which is white. The Drencher tablet will treat in total some 3000 sq metres per single application dependant upon your water pressure. The Drencher has micronutrients in it to aid the effectiveness of the product. Once the soil is wet again, then lawn renovation can commence. The picture above shows that the Drencher Tablet container will screw straight onto the Miracle Grow Diluter – this is just coincidence, scoop the product out as suggested above.

Connect the diluter to the hosepipe and hand water the problem areas until the water starts to run off the surface. Little and often is the key. You may notice some foam on the surface of the lawn but this will soon dispense. When the task is complete, simply keep any residual product in the diluter until next time! Do not mix with any fertiliser products. It is possible to over apply the wetting agent with the net result of brown grass.



How often should I apply the product to my lawn?

Please follow this programme –

Apply once a night in the first week - Curative

Apply once a week for the remaining weeks of the first month - Curative

Apply once a month thereafter between March and September – Preventative

If the grass trying to grow in these dry patch areas is dead, it is unlikely to come back if it is totally dead so some localised over sowing will be required. Nothing will grow in the garden without water!

How much does it cost?

When you have run out, we can supply you with another tablet at a current cost of £25.00 Inc P&P and VAT. It really does work and it can be applied to the complete lawn by following mowing lines, it can be applied in the rain and will only solve the problem if used as per the programme above so stick with it. To see if the soil is becoming wet again, cut out a small plug with your gardening knife.

I have an irrigation system, is the product available as a liquid?

It is possible to obtain a liquid wetting agent that can be dispensed via a side dispenser into the irrigation system. The products are safe for plants and you will infact require less water as the wetting agent makes water wetter, making it possible to penetrate dry soils easier. They are quite effective products, one litre can treat 18 golf greens for example so if an irrigation system has a 100-litre diluter, you would only require a small quantity each month to be dispensed around the garden. Localised problematic areas should be treated by hand to cure the problem as irrigation systems do not always provide 100% coverage across a lawn.

Wetting agents are also available in a granular form that is incorporated following aeration. They can be applied diluted with water as a liquid spray via a knapsack sprayer too.

To seek assistance – email technical@lawnsociety.org.uk