

Fusarium Disease

- Microdochium nivale

A devastating disease of lawns in the autumn and winter months, especially newly turfed or seeded lawns



Identification

Fusarium Disease on turf usually appears as small orange/brown circular spots of approx 50mm in diameter, which under favourable conditions may join together with other affected areas and completely cover a lawn. Under humid, still conditions, you will notice a white, grey cotton wool like mycelium forming as a small mound on the surface of the lawn. You will note an orange brown tinge to the circumference of the affected areas with mushy matted grass within. Early diagnosis is important.

Where has it come from?

On new lawns, welcome to 'real grass, and real grass problems!' Any lawn disease requires a Host - the grass species present in the lawn, a Pathogen - the fungus which causes the disease, in this case *Microdochium nivale* and the Environment - the humid atmospheric conditions and moist lawn surface. The Pathogen may always be present but only shows when conditions favouring the disease are present.

Will it kill the lawn, left untreated?

It will kill the lawn and leave scars on the surface, which will require remedial work once the disease has disappeared.

Did the disease arrive with the new turf?

No it would not have and it is all too commonly perceived that the disease outbreak is the fault of the turf grower or installer. The turf producer or installers have no control of a disease outbreak.

What are my options on control of the disease?

You will need to have a professional quality turf fungicide applied, which will have a contact and systemic mode of action. A repeat may be required within a 6-week period. The fungicide will dry the mycelium out and then help the grass fight the disease from within.

A week after applications, using a whippy bamboo cane, switches the dew from the surface of the lawn on a daily basis by making large sweeping circles on the surface with the cane. Keeping the turf blades dry will assist in the prevention of further outbreaks. Repair the lawn in the growing season by scarification, over seeding and top dressing. Apply a phased release lawn fertiliser every 8 weeks. Available from the number below -

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