



Dog Urine Damage on Turfgrass

Introduction

Dog urine can cause considerable damage to all turfgrass species. Damage caused by dog urine may be confused with damage caused by plant pathogens that produce patch-like symptoms. Diagnostic analysis of the plant material may be necessary to determine the cause of the damage.

Symptoms and Damage

Symptoms of dog urine damage include an area of necrotic tissue surrounded by a margin of a very healthy, dark green grass. Often damage is most noticeable after snow cover is removed from an area that has been used regularly by dogs (Fig. 1).



Figure 1: Dog urine damage on turfgrass. (provided by Karen L. Snover-Clift, Cornell University)

The soluble salts contained in animal urine are capable of killing turfgrass when deposited in high concentration in one location. Often more severe damage is noticed when female dogs have urinated in an area. Due to their squatting when urinating, they are probably depositing a greater amount of urine to one concentrated area than male dogs who spread out the urine when lifting their legs. Both male and female dogs can cause this damage. The damage is most severe on dry, infertile soil.



Figure 2: The causal agents, Ellie-Mae and Jethro. (provided by Karen L. Snover-Clift, Cornell University)

Management Strategies

Applying large amounts of water to the area will aid in dispersing the salts and reduce the amount of damage seen.

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READ THE LABEL BEFORE APPLYING ANY PESTICIDE! Changes in pesticide regulations occur constantly. All pesticides distributed, sold, and/or applied in New York State must be registered with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC). Questions concerning the legality and/or registration status for pesticide use in New York State should be directed to the appropriate Cornell Cooperative Extension Specialist or your regional DEC office.

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