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You've got the White Stuff

Finally, the snow has left our lawns and we can get back to that yard work. But wait- the lawn is white. It's not just your lawn, but every lawn down the drive. What is going on? Is this some joke that the neighbor kids are playing? Did they paint our lawns as a senior prank? Before you get out the hose to spray down the



lawn, let's take a closer look. The turf here has actually been infected with Gray Snow mold. The tiny spots are structures of the gray snow mold on dead leaf blades. Gray snow mold is typically the result of turf grass being under cover of snow for a long period of time. This winter gave us a perfect Petri dish for this to happen. The worse areas of infection are typically where the snow has lasted the longest-- usually where you have been piling it up all winter long. The damage looks much like the next photo:



Gray snow mold can attack the leaf blades, and if nothing is done about it, it can also affect the crown which will ultimately kill the whole grass plant. Timely treatment and cultural practice can help fight the battle against snow mold.

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Cultural practice begins in the late fall by allowing the turf canopy to grow up to 2 ½ inches before dormancy of the turf. This would need to be done in late September. Once the turf is in dormancy, quit mowing the turf. Allow it to go into dormancy without any new damage to the turf blade. Finally make sure there are no piles of leaves or debris left on top of the turf. Even after all of that, infection can still happen and leave us with the disease to deal with in the spring. Before doing anything, allow the turf to dry out. Once it is completely dried out, use a hand rake and break up the turf canopy to allow sunlight and air reach the crowns. Do not be overly aggressive doing this as it will be easy to kill the weak turf which is alive underneath. Once the weather improves and temps reach the 70's, apply seed to the infected areas to thicken the growth.

Put your lawn on a diet.

As you start up your irrigation system, think about all that money you could be saving if you get a professional audit done by Use Your Water Right. For more info go to www.useyourwaterright.com or call 320-310-4241 or email us at info@useyourwaterright.com.



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