

Dollar Spot Alert for Ontario For May 26, 2007

A Normal Year for Dollar Spot

Dollar spot typically arrives after the long weekend in May and continues until Thanksgiving. This year appears to be progressing as normal. If the weather continues to be warm as predicted then we will have accumulated 10 days, after May 1st in the Windsor area, with mean temperatures of >16°C by **Thursday May 24th**. The conditions will be right for dollar spot in the Toronto area starting this weekend, **May 26th**. The arrival of dollar spot symptoms coincides with the blooming of irises and the late-flowering of lilacs. The lilacs are blooming here in Guelph, but the iris in my garden doesn't seem to be doing anything yet. I fear that either the iris is not going to flower this year or my dollar spot prediction is inaccurate this year. Professionally, I hope that my model is accurate, but I recognize that you as superintendents would prefer a few more weeks of grace from dollar spot. Maybe the iris is right, only time will tell.

Preventative Applications of Fungicides

The dollar spot fungus is actively growing before we see the symptoms of disease. The model I use predicts the very first lesions on a leaf. These lesions are extremely small and you may not notice the disease at this stage. In fact, a week or more can pass before the single lesions progress to a typical "dollar spot" that is the size of a loonie. If no control measures were taken, the fungus was multiplying and causing new infection for days, building inoculum levels. A higher inoculum load can result in greater disease later in the season. Knowing this, it makes sense to start your season with a fungicide, such as Banner MAXX, Daconil Ultrex or Senator WSB, to control the dollar spot fungus before you see it, thus keeping inoculum levels low. This will help you avoid the sudden flare-ups of dollar spot, especially on mature turf swards.

Dollar spot activity is not predicted for the rest of Ontario at this time. As of May 26th, the Ottawa area will have accumulated 6 "disease conducive days". Therefore, after this weekend, superintendents are encouraged to count 4 days with a mean temperature above 16°C to predict the arrival of dollar spot in their area.

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