

Snow Mold

(Gray Snow Mold – *Typhula* spp. / Pink Snow Mold – *Microdochium nivale*)

Snow Mold is a **cool-season lawn disease** that appears after **long snow cover**, especially on **north-facing lawns, shaded areas, and yards with heavy thatch**. It causes **matted, bleached patches** in early spring. Most cases are **cosmetic and recover quickly** with light raking.



Seasonal Disease Activity Calendar

Icons: 🌸 Spring | ☀️ Summer | 🍂 Fall | ❄️ Winter

<u>Problem</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Active Season</u>	<u>Icons</u>
Snow Mold (Gray & Pink)	Fungus	Winter infection; visible Early Spring	❄️ 🌸

Symptoms (Homeowner-Friendly)

Gray Snow Mold (*Typhula* spp.)

- **Circular bleached patches** 3–12 inches wide
- **Matted, straw-colored grass**

- **Gray-white mycelium** when snow first melts
- Usually appears **with prolonged snow cover**
- Rarely kills grass crowns

Pink Snow Mold (*Microdochium nivale*)

(More serious)

- Pink, copper, or reddish tint along patch edges
- Can persist **without snow**, in cool wet weather
- May **kill crowns** in severe cases

Primary Causes (Colorado Conditions)

- Early heavy snow before soil is frozen
- Tall grass going into winter
- Excessive thatch
- Poor fall cleanup (leaf debris left on lawn)
- Heavy nitrogen fertilization in late fall
- Shaded or poorly draining lawns keeping snow longer

Treatment & Management

Immediate Spring Recovery Steps

Action

Lightly rake affected areas

Why it Works

Breaks up matted turf for airflow and regrowth

Action

Why it Works

Allow lawn to dry before walking on it Prevents further crown damage

Resume normal watering Helps new shoots grow through damaged tissue

Mow once growth resumes speeds cosmetic recovery

Most lawns recover in **2–4 weeks**.

Prevention Practices (Most Important)

Practice

Benefit

Mow as late as possible before first snow (2.5–3”) Reduces matting under snow

Remove leaves before winter Trapped moisture promotes fungal growth

Avoid heavy nitrogen after October 15 Encourages lush late growth prone to infection

Core aerate in fall Reduces thatch & improves drainage

Improve airflow and reduce shade if possible Snow melts faster; lawn stays drier

Fungicides (Optional & Preventive Only)

For high-value or historically affected lawns:

Fungicide Classes

Notes

DMI fungicides (propiconazole, myclobutanil)

Applied late fall before snow cover

QoI fungicides (azoxystrobin)

Often used in mix for broad protection

Chlorothalonil

Common for pink snow mold prevention

Fungicides must be applied **before winter**, not in spring.

When to Worry vs. When It's Cosmetic

● **When to Worry (action recommended)**

- Patches remain dead or brown **4–6 weeks into spring**
- Pink Snow Mold covering large areas
- Grass crowns are brown/mushy and do not regrow
- Lawn had heavy leaf debris under snow
- Snow lingered in deep shade for months
- Repeated yearly outbreaks

Severe cases may require **overseeding or slit-seeding** in late spring.

● **Mostly Cosmetic (monitor only)**

- Light bleaching or matting after snow melt
- Patches greening up within 1–3 weeks
- No pink coloration or crown damage
- Scattered small circles, not expanding
- Turf otherwise looks healthy

In most Colorado lawns, **Snow Mold is mild and temporary.**