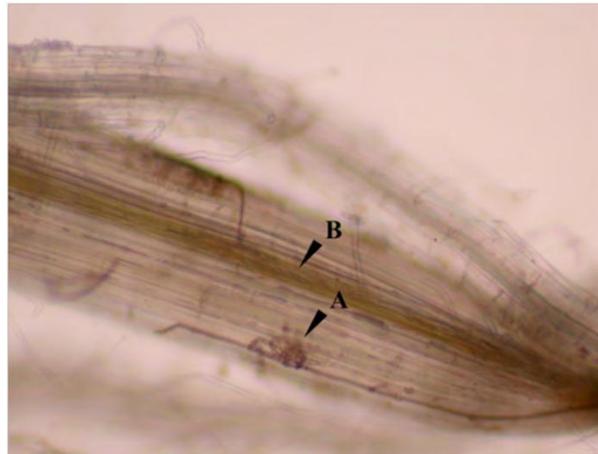


Summer Patch

(*Magnaporthe poae* — root-infecting fungus)

Summer Patch is a **serious, root-destroying turf disease** in Colorado, primarily affecting **Kentucky bluegrass** and occasionally annual bluegrass. It thrives in **hot soil temperatures, poor drainage, and compacted or overwatered lawns**. Damage is often mistaken for drought stress, but **watering does not revive affected patches**.



Seasonal Disease Activity Calendar

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

Problem	Type	Active Season	Icons
Summer Patch	Fungus	Spring infection; symptoms peak Summer	🌸 ☀️

Symptoms (Homeowner-Friendly)

<u>Symptom</u>	<u>Description</u>
Frog-eye or ring patterns	Patches of dead grass with green centers, similar to NRS but caused by a different fungus
Irregular yellow or brown patches	6"-3 ft wide, expanding during heat
Grass wilts and dies despite watering	Roots are damaged, so water cannot help
Root rot	Roots appear dark, rotted, brittle , with poor depth
Symptoms peak in hot weather	Especially July–September

Primary Causes (Colorado Conditions)

- Compacted clay soils
 - Overwatering or daily irrigation
 - Excessive thatch
 - High soil temperatures (>70°F at root zone)
 - Poor mowing height (cutting too short)
 - Shallow root systems
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Treatment & Management

Summer Patch is **difficult** because the pathogen infects **roots in spring**, but symptoms appear weeks later. Management focuses on **soil improvement + correct irrigation**.

1. Cultural Practices (Most Critical)

<u>Action</u>	<u>Why it Helps</u>
Raise mowing height to 3–3.5"	Encourages deeper rooting
Deep, infrequent watering	Prevents shallow, vulnerable roots
Core aeration 1–2× per year	Reduces compaction and improves drainage
Reduce thatch (<1/2")	Removes fungal habitat
Topdress with compost	Boosts beneficial microbes
Avoid excessive spring nitrogen	Produces weak, disease-prone roots

2. Overseeding (Recovery)

- Use **turf-type tall fescue** or disease-tolerant KBG varieties.
 - Overseed thin areas in late summer or early fall.
 - Consider replacing chronic Summer Patch areas with tall fescue entirely.
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3. Fungicide Options (Timing Is Everything)

*Fungicides must be applied **preventively in spring**, BEFORE symptoms appear.*

They **do not cure** active Summer Patch.

<u>Fungicide Class</u>	<u>Timing</u>	<u>Notes</u>
QoI fungicides (azoxystrobin)	Late May–June	Most effective option
DMI fungicides (propiconazole, myclobutanil)	Late May–June	Often tank-mixed

Fungicide Class

Timing

Notes

SDHI fungicides

Late May–June

Professional-only options for severe cases

Apply when **soil temps reach 65–70°F** at 2–3" depth.

When to Worry vs. When It's Cosmetic

● When to Worry (action recommended)

- Brown patches failing to respond to watering
- Frog-eye patterns enlarging each season
- Roots pulling up easily and appear dark/rotted
- Significant thinning every summer
- Chronic disease in the same areas year after year
- Lawns with compacted clay and poor drainage

These lawns need **long-term soil correction**, not just fungicides.

● Mostly Cosmetic (monitor only)

- Small patches that recover in cooler weather
- Yellowing during temporary heat waves
- Light thinning that responds to aeration and compost
- Minor symptoms in tall fescue lawns

Summer Patch is primarily a **Kentucky bluegrass problem**, and fescue blends greatly reduce recurrence.