Red Thread in Your Lawn

Noticing pink patches in your lawn? Red thread is a common disease on turf during cool wet weather in the spring and fall. Turfgrasses affected include tall fescue, fine fescue, rye grass, and to a lesser extent Kentucky bluegrass and Bermuda grass.

Red thread will produce, under optimum conditions of wet cool weather, a reddish gelatinous fungal growth that can be seen on leaf blades and sheaths.

These diseases are more damaging on under-fertilized turf. Often an application of fertilizer will alleviate disease severity. However, excessive fertilizer use can cause increased disease susceptibility. Follow UMD Extension fertility guidelines for turfgrass fertilization schedules. Select resistant turfgrass cultivars for establishment of turf.

For additional information go to our red thread page.

June Tips

- **Fertilize** houseplants now that they are actively growing again.
- If you want to take your houseplants outdoors, keep them out of full-sun locations until they are fully acclimated to outdoor conditions.
- Hornets and wasps, including yellow jackets, are active building nests now. Bees are also very active. See our section on *stinging insects* and **EB 248** for more information.
- Roses are especially hard hit by the leaf disease called **black spot**. For more information, go to our black spot page.
black spot. Use labeled fungicides to manage black spot throughout the growing season. Read more on black spot.

--- More seasonal tips

### Article

**Bite Back at Mosquitoes!**

With the wet weather this season, we are likely to begin seeing a lot of mosquitoes in the area. All the rain has produced standing water and more wet areas in which mosquitoes love to breed.

Empty any containers or objects in your yard that hold water regularly. Water in bird baths should be replaced every few days. Many people use corrugated drain pipe attached to downspouts to help move water away from their homes. The corrugations hold water and are a prime place for tiger mosquitoes to breed. To avoid the problem, use a smooth drain pipe or securely attach the corrugated drain pipe to the downspout and cover the open end with a piece of pantyhose secured with a rubber band. This will keep adult females out of the drain pipe. There are many options for controlling mosquitoes in ornamental ponds. These include the use of mosquitofish (*Gambusia affinis*) and biological insecticides.

--- Protect Yourself from Mosquito Bites
--- Maryland Department of Agriculture - Zika Awareness

### Featured Video

**Tomato Cages**
Baltimore Master Gardener Larry Kloze shows you how to build your own tomato cages using concrete reinforcing wire. They’re a great alternative to staking tomatoes.

--- Watch on Youtube
--- 2016 Year of the Tomato

Q&A

This river birch is planted in my front yard. It was planted two years ago. Last year I noticed a few of the leaves looked bad this time of year. Now, this spring the condition is much worse. The affected leaves are puckered and have bumps all over them. The undersides of the leaves contain a white, powdery substance. Is this some type of disease? So far about one third of the leaves are infected.

The damage to your tree is caused by the spiny witch hazel gall aphid, a common insect pest of birch trees, particularly of river birch. Injury from this aphid ranges from premature leaf drop to dead twigs and branches. However, the damage to the tree is mostly cosmetic and not too serious. This aphid has a complicated life cycle in that it alternates between two hosts: birch (Betula) and witch-hazel (Hamamelis spp.) The aphids become active in the spring when the leaf buds are opening. The growth and reproduction of the aphids is rapid, and the leaves soon develop characteristic “corrugations”. The white, powdery substance on the undersides of the leaves is also evidence of the aphids.

Examine the leaves for natural enemies such as ladybugs and their larvae, predaceous midge larvae, syrphid fly larvae, lacewing eggs and larvae, and parasite activity. Any combination of these predators and parasites may give sufficient control without having to spray with an insecticide.

--- Read more on shade tree galls
--- HG 58 - IPM Series: Birch Trees

Have a plant or pest question? University of Maryland Extension’s experts have answers!

Send in your questions and photos here.

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