

Laura Phillips
District Extension Agent, Horticulture

Brown Spots in Your Lawn

This time of year, many homeowners notice brown spots on their lawns. While there are many causes of discoloration in turf grasses, one common reason is a disease called Brown Patch. Brown Patch will affect all cool season turf grasses, making it one of the most widespread turf diseases.

Brown Patch causes roughly circular patches of, you guessed it, brown grass that can appear seemingly overnight. It can also cause tan lesions with black outlines on the individual blades of grass. Brown Patch is caused by a fungus known as *Rhizoctonia solani*. Our Kansas summers provide favorable conditions for Brown Patch, as it thrives in hot, humid weather.

Proper lawn care can prevent the appearance of Brown Patch or reduce its severity. When applying fertilizer, use only what the lawn needs, as excessive nitrogen from fertilizer will promote Brown Patch. Never fertilize when a Brown Patch is active. Avoid watering your lawn in the late afternoon or evening, as the water will not get a chance to evaporate before the sun goes down, allowing for moisture to stay on your grass longer. If the Brown Patch is severe, some home fungicides can fight Brown Patch. If your lawn has Brown Patch, start by practicing good lawn care, and reach out to our extension office for more care tips and fungicides available in your area.