Brown Patch in your lawn? How to avoid, prevent and cure it.

Brown Patch, caused by Rhizoctonia solani, is a turfgrass disease that may affect St. Augustine and Zoysia grasses in the Fall. The Brown Patch disease likes cool temperatures, high humidity, excess water all of which is brought on during Fall.

‘May affect’ are the operative words because Brown Patch is largely an avoidable problem. In the Organic world we do not see Brown Patch as a major problem. Conversely if the property is maintained chemically then Brown Patch is most likely to occur each and every year.

Avoiding and preventing Brown Patch: It’s all about soil health. Healthy soils will prevent Brown Patch from taking hold as the good microbes ‘beat up’ on the bad microbes. Good microbes need oxygen and a clean environment. Just like us! Soil pathogens (soil diseases) are anaerobic and like the exact opposite. Soils go anaerobic when they are compacted and too much water is applied.

Most turfgrass areas are maintained on compacted soils. Chemical applications further compact the soil and the property owner generally applies way too much water. The result .... Anaerobic soils that are conducive to Brown Patch growth. The solution for many homeowners and lawn professionals is to apply a chemical fungicide in response. That is absolutely the wrong thing to do! Chemical fungicides are toxic poisons that kill good microbes and only temporarily abate Brown Patch.

Without the good microbes to protect the turfgrass, Brown Patch becomes a recurring problem.

The Organic approach, by solving the core issue of soil health, will solve the problem on a permanent basis and will do so safely. This is important because all chemical fungicides are dangerous to humans & animals.
To avoid and prevent Brown Patch is pretty easy. Just follow these steps –

**Never** use chemical fertilizers as they compact the soil.

**Never** use chemical fungicides as they kill off the natural enemies of Brown Patch.

**Remember** the Fall Equinox, September 23rd. At that date turfgrass physiologically changes. It goes from active growing to its dormant state. This means it needs much less water.

**Avoid too much water!** Most people, remembering the hot Summer and forget to turn their turf irrigation water down. As a general rule, after September 23rd, turfgrass does not need more than one irrigation per week.

**Throughout the year** only use quality Organic fertilizers like MicroLife to loosen the soil and increase the good microbes population numbers.

**To further prevent and treat Brown Patch** apply a well proven Bio Inoculant like MicroGro Granular which colonizes around the root system, protecting the plant from harmful root pathogens.

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**Fall Fertilizer and fight Brown Patch at the same time.** A great product for this is MicroLife Brown Patch 5-1-3. It will correctly feed your turf in the fall, reduce compaction and add billions of protecting microbes.

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**Active Brown Patch, what to do?** At this point apply MicroGro Granular at 10 lb per 1,000 sq ft. to the active area and a 5’ perimeter around the affected area. Also make sure that the irrigation is turned down. If the turf is treated early enough then we will still have a chance for the turfgrass to grow before it goes completely dormant.