

# Thatch Collapse Disease

## What is it?

- The thatch collapse fungi most likely belong to the fairy ring type fungi that live in the thatch rather than the soil.
- When thatch collapse occurs the thatch is generally decomposed down to the next soil or sand layer. 'Layered' or thatchy profiles are more prone to thatch collapse than 'well-mixed' profiles.
- The main problem associated with thatch collapse is that it is usually associated with water repellency causing dry patch.
- While sometimes found in the wetter areas, most commonly thatch collapse is seen on the drier areas and is usually associated with uneven or poor distribution of the irrigation system.
- Prolonged period of warm, dry weather followed by rain will encourage the thatch collapse to appear.
- Generally 'scars' occurring in late summer/early autumn often remain over the winter, due mainly to the difference in cutting heights of the grass within the patch and the unaffected area.

## Prevention/control

Chemical control of such fungi is very difficult and often management practices are more effective in reducing the symptoms.

- Thatch collapse is often associated with poor renovation or topdressing practices that results in either layered profiles or excessive thatch accumulation.

## To manage thatch collapse

- Return to renovating the greens twice a year (or more) depending on the extent of your thatch problem.

- ❑ Use hollow tynes (at close spacing max 50x50mm) rather than solid tynes when managing thatch. Core to just below the thatch zone.
- ❑ Topdress in relation to growth during the growing season to avoid layering within the profile.
- ❑ Concentrate on incorporating topdressing material into the thatch.
- ❑ Treat dry patch early, during the late spring/early summer.
- ❑ Check the distribution of your irrigation system and modify where necessary.
- ❑ Avoid letting the surface thatch becoming water repellent. Use a combination of watering cycles of deep watering and regular light waterings (a - ½ ET) cycles, to keep the thatch moist.
- ❑ Treat last year's thatch collapse areas early (late spring / summer).

Apply localised applications of topdressing material to improve surface smoothness.

## Chemical control

- ❑ Chemical control to date has not proven to be reliable. There are several fungicides (e.g. Amistar & Sapro) that have some potential.

These fungicides would be best used as a preventative (late spring/early summer) treatment and not as a curative treatment when the patches appear.

Where fungicides are used the areas should be spiked and the fungicide applied with a wetting agent in a high water rate (10L of water/100m<sup>2</sup>). Sometimes sugar applications (20-30kg/ha) have masked the effect or reduced the symptoms when applied in the spring. Do not apply the sugar in the late summer if your course is prone to dollar spot disease problems.

NZSTI SPORTS TURF ADVISORS – CONTACT DETAILS			
Alex Glasgow 09 529 5064 027 496 2486 <a href="mailto:alexg@nzsti.org.nz">alexg@nzsti.org.nz</a>	Everett Darlington 09 529 486 027 232 4545 <a href="mailto:edarlington@nzsti.org.nz">edarlington@nzsti.org.nz</a>	David Ormsby 07 846 7698 027 442 8053 <a href="mailto:davido@nzsti.org.nz">davido@nzsti.org.nz</a>	Megan Cushnahan 06 355 7021 027 220 9957 <a href="mailto:mcushnahan@nzsti.org.nz">mcushnahan@nzsti.org.nz</a>
Andrew Mitchell 06 356 8090 ext 722 027 662 0148 <a href="mailto:amitchell@nzsti.org.nz">amitchell@nzsti.org.nz</a>	Brendan Hannan 06 355 7024 027 442 8046 <a href="mailto:bhannan@nzsti.org.nz">bhannan@nzsti.org.nz</a>	Chris Gribben 06 355 7026 027 552 4488 <a href="mailto:cgribben@nzsti.org.nz">cgribben@nzsti.org.nz</a>	Jaymie Batchelor 03 323 8010 027 446 2874 <a href="mailto:jbachelor@nzsti.org.nz">jbachelor@nzsti.org.nz</a>
David Howard 03 477 7333 027 446 2875 <a href="mailto:dhoward@nzsti.org.nz">dhoward@nzsti.org.nz</a>	<b>www.nzsti.org.nz</b>		