Submitting turf disease samples to UNL
October 19, 2017

Dealing with turfgrass diseases is frustrating, especially if you're not sure which disease to hold accountable. Moreover, abiotic stresses (e.g. drought, heat, traffic, etc.) can cause simlar turf injury to common diseases, and are often misdiagnosed as infectious diseases without confirmation from a diagnostic lab. The ***Plant and Pest Diagnosic Clinic at UNL*** already offers diagnostic services for turfgrass managers, and I plan to work closely with the diagnostic clinic when turfgrass samples are submitted in the future. If you don't already use these services, please consider it. Basic diagnostic services only cost $15, and additional fees may apply if further testing is requested. Diagnoses are generally returned within five working days.

Instructions for sample submission can be found by following the hyperlink above, or by pasting the following link into your web browser: https://cropwatch.unl.edu/plantdisease/unl-diagnostic-clinic-lincoln.

To submit a sample, you'll need to do the following:

1. Visit the website above, print, and fill out the sample submission form.
2. Collect a sample that contains healthy turf and turf expressing symptoms of decline. The samples should contain leaves, roots, and soil (only to the depth of the rootzone).
    a. **Golf** – collect 1-2 cupcutter plugs from affected areas. The plugs should contain both diseased and healthy turf, so try to center the leading edge of disease development in the plug so that 1/2 to 2/3 of the plug is diseased, and the other 1/3 to 1/2 of the plug is healthy turf.
    b. **Athletic fields and lawns** – use a shovel to collect 1-2 square samples that measure 4-5 inches on each side. The samples should contain both diseased and healthy turf, so try to center the leading edge of disease development in the sample so that 1/2 to 2/3 of the sample is diseased, and the other 1/3 to 1/2 of the sample is healthy turf. Remember only to make the sample as deep as the rootzone (usually 4 inches is sufficient), and discard soil below this depth.
3. Wrap the base of the plug (soil and roots) in aluminum foil, leaving the leaves exposed. This helps retain moisture in the plug, and also provides structural support.
4. Place your samples in a cardboard box, and fill voids in the box with newspaper or bubble wrap to protect your samples during shipment.
5. Place your completed submission form in the box and seal for shipping.
6. Ship your sample to:

Plant and Pest Diagnostic Clinic
448 Plant Science Hall
Lincoln, NE 68583-0722

These services may be helpful yet this fall, and can definitely benefit your turf next year. Please keep the diagnostic clinic in mind in the future.

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