

**Slime molds**

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Recent warm, wet, and overcast conditions have led to the development of many troublesome turfgrass diseases such as dollar spot, brown patch, and even *Pythium* blight in some locations. These conditions have also benefited slime mold abundance, leaving some curious about the potential for turf injury from these organisms. While slime molds are showy, they do not infect turf and are of minor concern.

**Symptoms.** Slime molds can appear suddenly on any turf species during warm, wet weather (especially in shaded or overcast conditions). The fruiting bodies of these organisms grow on turfgrass stems and leaf blades, and are commonly smoky gray to black (Figure 1), but may also be white, yellow, or pink to purple. These fruiting structures may last a few weeks if not removed. Under heavy infestations, leaves that are densely covered may yellow from low-light stress during this time. Don't confuse slime molds with rusts, which are also currently active. Rusts are parasitic to turf ([http://turf.unl.edu/turfinfo/10-12\\_Rusty\\_turf.pdf](http://turf.unl.edu/turfinfo/10-12_Rusty_turf.pdf)).



**Figure 1.** Fruiting structures of a slime mold on perennial ryegrass (*left and center*) and rust on Kentucky bluegrass (*right*).

**Management.** Physically remove spores from turf with mowing, brushing, raking, or by running water over affected areas. Over time, cultural practices that limit excessive thatch accumulation may reduce the occurrence of slime molds.

**Bottom line.** Slime molds are not pathogenic to turf, but instead consume bacteria and other microorganisms. They appear when spores that were already in the soil germinate when conditions are favorable. If bothersome, physically remove spores when they appear on turf.

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