

Scale pests are damaging greens in SE QLD

Laboratory diagnosis has confirmed rare infestations of couch scale and mealy bug on many greens in SE QLD.

Couch scale and mealy bug are not usually a major concern for turfgrass, but currently they are causing significant turf weakness and turf decline in severe cases.

In some instances, these scale insect pests can be misdiagnosed as White Helmo and has been incorrectly treated with a fungicide that has no impact on the pest.

Appropriate treatments should be carried out immediately prior to onset of winter.



Above: Mealy bug remnants and black sooty mould on a couch stolon.



Above: Damaged turfgrass on green from scale insects.



Above: Burst and dead mealy bug removed from stem.



Above & Below: Residue from scale insects under the turf canopy. This can be misdiagnosed as White Helmo.

It's not White Helmo

Paul Spencer, Chief Agronomist at Greenway Turf Solutions, has identified that a significant number of golf courses and bowling greens in SE QLD being affected by large populations of 'scale insects', which has been confirmed through laboratory diagnosis.

The scale insects include microscopic 'couch scale' (although exact local species has never been identified) and mealy bug. Both feed on the stems of the turfgrass below the canopy so it can sometimes be hard to detect until patches occur.

This causes the older lower leaves of the turf to die off (leaf tips can remain green) as they remove nutrients and water from the plant. While this rarely causes complete turf decline, it will weaken the turfgrass and make it more susceptible to other pathogens such as fungal diseases.

Currently in SE QLD, scale populations in golf course and bowling greens are at a level that is causing significant patches of turf decline. This is not ideal just before winter.

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Talk to your GTS Agronomist for more information

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An agronomic approach to turfgrass management