THE UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA
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HOMEOWNER PLANT DISEASE CLINIC REPORT

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Fall has finally arrived. I am eager for cooler temperatures and the seasonal color change which will follow. Sample submission drops rather significantly in mid-to-late October here in the diagnostic clinic in Athens, and as always, I welcome this decline, in that, it gives me opportunities to participate in various other extension-related activities and I do not feel so attached to the clinic.

Autumn is not only the time of year for Georgia football, fall festivals, pumpkin patches, and trips to the mountains to stare at the beautiful scenery, but it is also a time to clean-up what was the summer garden and various landscape plants and beds. Fall sanitation is vital to plant disease prevention, and spending a couple of hours in the yard removing and discarding dead/dying branches; pulling old, wilted tomato plants and other summer veggies that are barely hanging on; and adding mulch will carry homeowners a long way into the new year. So, please get the word out about the necessity of fall clean-up as a means of plant disease management.

Slime molds will be September's monthly topic and as you all know, they are not plant disease organisms but beautiful, many times minute (and therefore overlooked), colonizers of organic and woody tissues. ENJOY!

September 2008 Homeowner Samples

County	Plant	Common Name of Disease (Pathogen)	Type of Sample – DDDI or Physical
Bibb	Lantana	Unable to determine	DDDI
Camden	Zoysia grass	No disease – insufficient sample	Both
Camden	Centipede	Possible Take all root rot	DDDI
Camden	Sago Palm	Unable to determine	DDDI
Candler	Tomato	Tomato Spotted Wilt Virus (TSWV)	Physical
Chatham	St. Augustine	Take all root rot (*Gaeumannomyces graminis* var. *graminis*)	DDDI
Clarke	Tomato	Bacterial Wilt (*Ralstonia*	Physical

County	Plant	Common Name of Disease (Pathogen)	Type of Sample – DDDI or Physical
		solanacearum)	
Clarke	Rick-Rack Plant	No disease – oedema	Physical
Cobb	Fescue	No disease – cultural – drainage issues	Physical
Cobb	Brugmansia	No disease	Physical
Coweta	Zoysia grass	Large Patch (*Rhizoctonia solani*)	Physical
DeKalb	St. Augustine	Take all root rot (*G. graminis* var. *graminis*)	Physical
DeKalb	St. Augustine	Take all root rot (*G. graminis* var. *graminis*)	Physical
Dooly	Indian Hawthorne	No disease – likely cultural	Physical
Dougherty	St. Augustine	No disease – likely cultural – overwatering	Physical
Dougherty	Asiatic Jasmine	No disease	Physical
Echols	Rose	Unable to determine	DDDI
Elbert	Bermuda	Slime mold (likely *Physarum* sp.)	DDDI
Evans	Crabapple	Rust (*Gymnosporangium* sp.)	Physical
Fannin	Blueberry	Unable to determine – possible burn	DDDI
Fayette	Japanese Black Pine	No disease	Physical
Fayette	Arizona Cypress	Needle blight (*Cercosporidium* sp.)	Physical
Forsyth	Liriope	No disease – scale insects – in crown	Physical
Fulton	Ivy	Cultural – overwatering & Root rot (*Pythium* sp.)	Physical
Grady	St. Augustine	Take all root rot (*G. graminis* var. *graminis*)	Physical
Greene	Maple	Possible Fusicoccum canker (aka Bot canker)	Physical
Greene	Zoysia grass	Cultural – too wet, thatch; Take all root rot (*G. graminis* var. *graminis*)	Both
Henry	Tomato	Root rot (*Rhizoctonia* sp.)	Both
Henry	Okra	No disease – Warty pod – nutritional/physiological	Both
Henry	Knockout Roses	Possible Virus	Both
Henry	Centipede	Minor Take all root rot (*G. graminis* var. *graminis*)	Both
Henry	Rhododendron	Unable to determine – deteriorated sample	Physical
Henry	Laurel	No disease – insect damage	Both

County	Plant	Common Name of Disease (Pathogen)	Type of Sample – DDDI or Physical
Henry	Maple	No disease – possible burn	DDDI
Irwin	Pomegranate	No disease	Physical
Jasper	Bermuda grass (mixed)	Resubmit – poor sample quality	Physical
Jasper	Azalea	Possible Azalea lace bug or spider mite damage	DDDI
Jasper	Japanese Magnolia	Dead/dried leaves – resubmit a fresher sample	DDDI
Morgan	River Birch	Possible drought stress & leaf spot (*Phyllosticta* sp.)	Both
Morgan	Bermuda grass	Minor Large Patch (*R. solani*); THATCH	Both
Morgan	Muscadine	Bitter rot (*Melanconium* sp)	Both
Muscogee	Zoysia grass	Large Patch (*R. solani*)	Physical
Muscogee	St. Augustine	Large Patch (*R*. *solani*)	Physical
Muscogee	Cedar	Unable to determine	DDDI
Paulding	Zoysia grass	Unable to determine – possible disease	DDDI
Pike	Muscadine	No disease – possible spider mite damage	Physical
Richmond	St. Augustine	Take all root rot (*G. graminis* var. *graminis*); Large Patch (*R. solani*); cultural – thatch	Physical
Richmond	St. Augustine	Take all root rot (*G. graminis* var. *graminis*)	Physical
Schley	Hickory Tree	Wood rot – decaying conk	DDDI
Toombs	Cryptomeria	Possible disease	DDDI
Toombs	Centipede	Possible Take all root rot	DDDI
Worth	St. Augustine	Chinch bugs!; Take all root rot (*G. graminis* var. *graminis*); Large Patch (*R. solani*)	Physical
NA	Pine	No disease – environmental/site problems	Physical
Total samples (late August – September) = 53 DDDI = 15 Physical = 28 Both = 10			

Slime molds

- So, what are slime molds?
  - ✓ Slime molds are also known as Myxomycetes.
  - ✓ The Greek meaning is: *myxa* = slime + *mycetes* = mushrooms, fungi.
  - ✓ I am not a huge fan of Wikipedia, but I will use their definition because it is likely the easiest one to understand:
    - "…a broad term referring to amoeba-like organisms, hence the name slime, and which feed on microorganisms in decaying vegetable matter, hence the name molds. They can be found in the soil, on lawns, and in the forest commonly on deciduous logs. They are also common on mulch or even in leaf mold which collects in gutters."
    - To read more about them, you can simply google 'slime molds'. They are very incredible, vibrant organisms.

- Are they pathogenic?
  - ✓ NO.
  - ✓ They do not parasitize plants or mulch but simply colonize these tissues.

- Are they harmful to my plants or turf?
  - ✓ Not directly.
  - ✓ Rarely, they can injure smaller plants by shading or smothering them but this generally does not occur (as far as I know).

- Similarly to other types of fungi, slime molds thrive in moist, organic locations – such as a freshly mulched landscape bed that is on the edge of the sprinkler system for the lawn.

- So, why discuss them at all in a 'disease' report?
  - ✓ Well, we get tons of calls every year about different slime molds.
  - ✓ Slime molds are a cosmopolitan group and can be found in very diverse places.
  - ✓ This may better prepare you to answer homeowner's questions.

- How do homeowners get rid of them if they just can not stand the sight of these stunning organisms?
  - ✓ Inform the homeowner that they generally will go away on their own.
  - ✓ If that doesn't appease the homeowner, the homeowner can remove them by:
    - Raking them or turning them under (if on mulch);
    - Washing them away with pressurized water – garden hose.

- Below are a **FEW** examples…if you ever have questions about a potential slime mold don't hesitate to take a great picture and send it to me!

Photo: S. Brady, Cobb Co.

Both the above images are of the very common slime mold, ***Stemonitis* sp.** The image taken by Steve Brady shows the slime mold growing on the side of a house!
Here is a link with a more detailed description:
http://www.messiah.edu/Oakes/fungi_on_wood/club%20and%20coral/species%20pages/Stemonitis.htm.
We get many emails and questions about this slime mold!!!!

This slime mold, ***Diachea leucopodia***, was found growing on the foliage of an unidentified plant and on the pine straw mulch, which is picture above.

I'm sure most, if not all of you, have gotten questions about this infamous slime mold…any guesses???

This is the common mulch inhabitant, ***Fuligo septica***, a.k.a. the dog vomit slime mold.

(More info: http://botit.botany.wisc.edu/toms_fungi/june99.html)

This particular slime mold, similarly to most in the group, can be a variety of colors from the dull yellowish color seen above to very bright neon yellow seen below.

Slime molds, as previously mentioned, also colonize warm season turfgrasses. The above organism is likely a species of ***Physarum***. You can refer to Alfredo's publication on turfgrass diseases for more information: http://pubs.caes.uga.edu/caespubs/pubcd/B1233.htm#SlimeMold.

REFERENCES:

- ✓ www.invasive.org – Pictures with a UGA#
  - UGA5137052 – Joe LaForest, UGA
  - UGA1406217 – USDA Forest Service, North Central Research Station Archive
- ✓ Wikipedia