



Homegrown Horticulture

TIPS FOR SUCCESS IN YOUR OWN BACKYARD

Fairy Rings (in lawns)

Sometimes, in some lawns, you will notice a strange phenomenon that develops on your lawn (or maybe that of a neighbor or a nearby park). What you will see are areas of the grass turning a darker green than other parts. However, the colour change will be in a partial or full circles/rings, or arcs. The grass in the band of the arcs or rings will be especially lush. Over time, these rings will continue to expand and spread, getting bigger and bigger, sometimes reaching many metres wide. In some cases, you might notice a tan-coloured dead area inside the ring and you will likely notice tan-coloured mushrooms sprouting up inside the lush green areas of the ring, usually in wet conditions. Each of these symptoms relate to different types of fairy rings. Some of the types are less concerning and are more cosmetic than others.

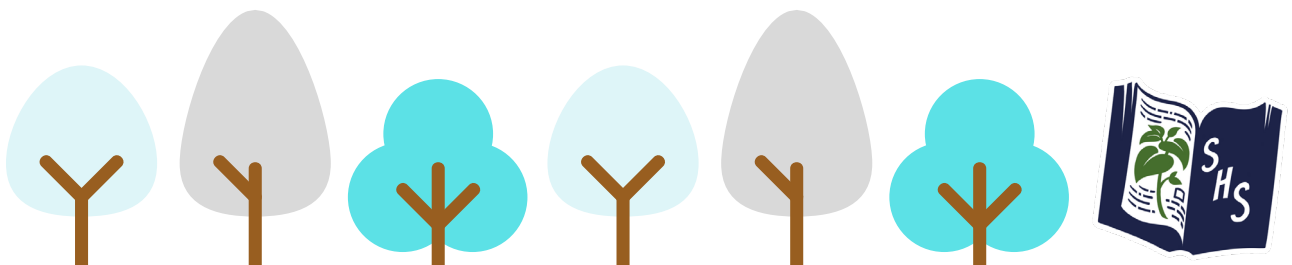
What is this phenomenon? It is a fungal infection of the lawn called “Fairy Rings”. It can affect lawns in almost any area. It is more likely to occur in dry soils and in lawns that have a heavy thatch layer. It may also appear in areas where trees have been recently removed. A lawn can become infected with fairy rings when spores are blown by the wind, or when soil or organic matter are introduced to a lawn from an infected site.

The fungus essentially grows in the upper parts of the soil, just underneath the grass. Over time, the fungus can form a layer that is almost impervious to water, preventing water to reach the roots. In these cases, you get the tan-coloured, dead areas. As the fungus breaks down organic matter in the soil, it releases nitrogen, which is what causes the bright green, lush growth and colour in many situations.

There isn't really a “treatment” (chemical or natural) for fairy ring, as much as people would like to have something that they can dump onto it to kill it off.

To manage fairy rings, you should reduce the thickness of the thatch layer and do what you can to keep soil moisture levels even, to slow down the development of the fungus. You can also fertilize to stimulate the growth of other parts of the lawn, which masks the green ring symptoms somewhat. For the green ring types, in lots of cases, you can just wait for them to eventually grow out and disappear. You just have to be patient and not concerned about appearances.

To deal with the tan areas and to try and knock back the fungus, aerate the lawn and soil deeply, by spiking down with something like a garden fork. You are trying to punch through the water-repellant layer. At that point, you should soak the ground heavily. Keep watering heavily and deeply, to make sure that water is reaching the roots. If you notice the mushrooms, you might remove them by hand (with gloves) or rake them up and dispose of them.





Spencer Horticultural Solutions



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