

Problem: Slime Mold - *Physarum cinereum*; *Mucilago spongiosa*



Hosts: All turfgrasses (can also occur on mulch)

Description: Slime molds are primitive organisms that are common on turf and mulch. Slime molds are not fungi and are no longer classified as such. They belong to the Kingdom Protista rather than Kingdom Fungi. On turf, you might often see large numbers of small gray, white or purple fruiting structures, called sporangia on leaf blades during cool and humid weather throughout spring, summer and fall. Affected areas are often several inches to 1 foot in diameter. During wet weather, the fruiting structures may appear slimy. As the structures dry out in hot weather, they become ash gray and break up easily when touched. Homeowners often are concerned that this is a disease organism that will kill the grass, but slime mold feeds on bacteria, other fungi and dead organic matter. It simply uses the turf as a structure on which to grow. However, slime mold can damage turf by completely covering leaf blades and interfering with photosynthesis.

Slime molds on mulch often attract attention because of their bright colors and disgusting appearance. Common names are often quite descriptive. For example, the "dog vomit" slime mold is a bright, whitish color that resembles its namesake. It eventually turns brown and then into a hard, white mass. There is also the "scrambled egg" slime mold, "the yellow blob" slime mold and the "regurgitated cat breakfast" slime mold.

Recommendations: Chemical control of slime molds is not necessary. Use a broom or a heavy spray of water to dislodge the mold from turfgrass. Simply use a shovel to discard the offensive organism from mulch and then stir up the mulch for aeration.

References:

1. [Slime Mold](#), K-State Research and Extension Plant Pathology Fact Sheet.

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