

CMG Garden Notes #571

Homework: Turf Diagnostics

1. When diagnosing over the phone or by email, it is essential to get photos (including wide-angle of as much of the lawn as possible) and all information on how the lawn is being managed (how they are watering, mowing, fertilizing). The potential cause of the problem is often related in some way to how the lawn is being managed. What might be happening with this lawn? Read the email carefully- there are valuable clues here! Do you need more information from the client?

From:

[REDACTED]

Date:

Tue, Oct 20, 2015 at 2:40 PM

Subject: RE: Grass Samples

Here are pictures of the yellow grass. We water nearly every day for about 50 minutes. I have 5 zones spread across .8 of an acre with 5 heads per zone that spray some 20 feet in 355 degree circles. I keep the grass 3 inches or better most of the time.



I added some Poudre Valley Co-op's Green-N-

Grow fertilizer on the grass in late spring & it started to yellow up. When it turned yellowish I thought I may have added too much but it never really got better. Any ideas?

Thanks, Lindsey

2. An email with some photos from the resident of an HOA.

This is in xxxxxxxxxxxx HOA at 17th and Francis. Our contract service provider says it is blight aggravated by the wheels of the mowing machine which caused the strips. What is your analysis? Is the grass dead? Should we ask the lawn contractor to replace the sod? And what can we do differently next time to prevent? It has been very dry and hot, a record early so early in the year. What will July and August hold? Why should it be just in certain places? There are about 4 bad acres similar to this. I'll appreciate your help.



3. This is an email from a colleague who was stumped. A number of potential causes had been eliminated. There are some good, useful clues here. Are there any other questions to ask the client? What else could be looked at to ascertain the cause of the mysterious brown spots?

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, September 18, 2015 6:09PM
To: Koski,Anthony <Tony.Koski@ColoState.EDU>
Subject: Lawn Brown spots

Hi Tony

Attached photo shows a pattern of recent browning ("the last 3 weeks") in KBG front lawn; unfenced. There is well over 1000 sq ft of turf area affected in this same pattern.

When I looked at it, I was able to eliminate grubs, NRS, dog urine, and cranberry girdlers as possible causes. This "looks like" dog urine injury but there would have to be 150 dogs that use this front lawn to the exclusion of all neighboring lawns.

- a. The soil is a clay loam, moist at an inch under brown spots but dry at soil surface
- b. Irrigation 3X/week, early morning hours
- c. Exposure is full day-long sun, on a hot SSW-facing slope.
- d. Browened blades pull up/off easily, leaving roots behind in the soil.
- e. Thatch layer is no more than X inch anywhere checked.
- f. Rooting depth seems limited to about 1.5 inches.
- g. Core cultivation is "every September" but not yet done this year.
- h. Some blade shredding from dull mower blade.

Can you help me with some ideas on possible causes? Their HOA is pressuring them to "fix" this.

