

## Varied Factors Lead To Centipede Decline

Centipede grass is a low-maintenance warm season grass grown extensively throughout eastern North Carolina in home lawns and utility areas. Healthy centipede grass is best maintained at mowing heights of 1 inch to 1.5 inches. The natural color of centipede is a yellow-lime green. Lawns heavily fertilized and maintained to a deep shade of green eventually succumb to disease, insect, or thatch problems.

Centipede decline is one of the most common problems of this lawn grass in the Southeast. Research has shown this severe lawn problem to be caused by several factors. Soil fertility, including low potassium levels in sandy soils, excessive use of nitrogen fertilizer and low or high soil pH (pH 5.5 is optimum) are commonly associated with centipede decline.

Nematode infestations have been associated with the "decline" in very sandy soils. The sting nematode prefers coarse, well drained sandy soils of the sandhills and coastal plains. Centipede grass affected by this nematode will become thin and may even die during hot, dry weather. No nematocides are presently approved for homeowner use, so good management practices must be used to survive a severe nematode infestation. Gardeners whose centipede lawns have chronic high populations of sting nematode may consider planting more nematode-tolerant grasses such as bahia grass or common bermuda grass.

Fairy rings are large circular dead spots or green rings (3 feet to 20 feet in diameter) that will enlarge every year. Mushrooms are often present at the edge of the ring sometime during the year. During hot, dry periods the outer band of soil of the fairy ring will become hydrophobic (repel water) and the grass will die. Opening these areas up with a pitchfork and soaking with water seems to alleviate the problem. Roto-tilling

### THE PLANT DOCTOR

C. BRUCE WILLIAMS  
Extension Area  
Turf Specialist



the soil in these areas and replanting healthy grass has eliminated the problem in cases. No effective chemical fungicide treatment is available for fairy ring in home lawns.

Ground pearls are small scale insects that feed on the roots of centipede grass and cause circular dead areas somewhat similar to fairy ring. The small (1/8 inch), round, creamy colored immature ground pearl nymph can usually be seen in the soil of severely infected centipede. During June and July, the small (1/4 inch) pink adult female can be seen slowing moving over the soil surface. Ground pearls are an insect problem unique to the sandy soils of select areas of the southeast United States. No effective control has ever been identified for controlling ground pearls.

Improper mowing can be a major cause of centipede grass decline. Experimental plots mowed at 2 inches showed greater centipede grass decline than plots mowed at 1 inch. More thatch accumulated at the higher mowing height and this is believed to be a major factor in poor centipede survival.

Cold weather damage is a major influence causing centipede grass decline. I have observed severe centipede grass decline in the spring or summer following unusually cold winters or following winters with unusually warm weather and then

late cold periods. Excess nitrogen fertilizer increases the thatch problem and makes the grass more prone to cold damage. Never overfertilize centipede grass.

Centipede grass is not very drought tolerant and may be damaged during very dry weather. Fertilization may increase the damage caused by drought. The use of fertilizers low in nitrogen and high in potassium will help reduce environmental stress in summer and winter. Pesticides are often the cause of centipede grass decline. Improper use of labeled pesticides or the incorrect pesticides can cause serious, permanent injury to a centipede lawn.

Centipede grass is very sensitive to some herbicides and recommended herbicides should be used according to label directions.

Centipede decline can be caused by a multitude of different factors and accurate records of previous treatment are often helpful in diagnosing the problem. Once the grass dies in an area, centipede will usually spread over the damaged area if the old grass is removed and the soil loosened. New sprigs can be planted in these areas during the late spring or summer for faster recovery.

Send your gardening questions and comments to The Plant Doctor, P.O. Box 109, Bolivia, N.C. 28422.



PHOTO BY MARTHA HANNON

### July Yard Is Colorful

The landscape of Bob and Martha Lovaty of 94 Carolina Shores Drive, received the July Yard of the Month designation from the Carolina Shores Garden Club. Rose of sharon, chrysanthemum, dusty miller and a variety of annuals create a colorful display within the sculpted beds that surround their home.

## Ceramists Place At Show

Two local ceramics students, Jennifer Sexton and Shannon Nichols of Supply, won first place blue ribbons and trophies for their entries at the 21st annual Ceramics and Porcelain Doll Show.

The show was held by the Eastern North Carolina Ceramic Association June 26 and 27 at Lenoir Community College in Kinston.

Sexton entered a dry brushed deer, while Nichols' entry was a dry brushed unicorn.

Their instructor, Rose Hadnot of Holden Beach, received The Peggy Award, presented to the best in show, professional division, for a Sgraffito fish design vase.

Hadnot also earned first runner-up for a cut-out Christmas candle holder and a blue ribbon for a fired gold bird design vase.

Two other students also placed in competition. Carolyn Sexton of Supply received a first place award for a dry brushed duck box, while Emma Ford of Little River, S.C., received a third place ribbon for a bull and matador.

Awards were presented in seven divisions: adult hobbyists, children

through age 12; teens ages 13-17; professionals; senior citizens; special people; and novice.

## Plywood Sale Set July 12

A "special sale" on a limited amount of used plywood will be held Monday, July 12, at Military Ocean Terminal, Sunny Point, from 8:30 a.m. until 1 p.m.

The plywood is \$6 per full sheet and \$3 per half-sheet. Sales are conducted on a first-come, first-served basis.

**CENTIPEDE SOD**  
Gressette Sod Farms  
1-800-444-2993 FLORENCE, SC

**Arts & Crafts Show**  
Now At 2 Locations

- Over 60 crafters
- Miniatures
- Gourmet Fudge
- Sugar-Free Chocolate

**The Gingerbread House**  
A Delightfully Different Place to Shop

We Ship Everywhere

First Quality Crafts Wanted On Consignment Basis

Shallotte: Hours 9:30-8:00  
Holden Beach Rd. 1/2 mile from Wal-Mart 754-8979

Calabash: Summer Hours 10-9:30  
Beach Dr. SW 500 ft. east of stoplight 579-8485

**America's Favorite Frozen Yogurt**  
When Taste Matters

Stop by today and ignite your tastebuds with Colombo.

**2 for 1**

Bring this to store listed. Buy a large serving of Colombo Frozen Yogurt and get a second of equal or lesser value Free.

Good at Shallotte and Southport Express Stops

Limit 1 per customer. Not redeemable for cash. Not valid with any other promotion.

**Express Stop**  
24 Hours A Day - 7 Days - Shallotte-Jct. Hwy. 17 & Holden Bch Rd.

<p><b>Butcher Shop</b></p> <p><b>Whole Bottom Rounds</b></p> <p>Sliced FREE!</p> <p><b>\$1.29</b> Lb.</p> <p>USDA Choice Beef Untrimmed (20-22 Lbs. Avg.)</p> <p>Save 70¢/Lb.</p>	<p><b>Produce</b></p> <p><b>Summer Fruit Sale</b></p> <p>Large Peaches/ Sunblushed Nectarines/ Sweet Juicy Plums</p> <p><b>49¢</b> Lb.</p> <p>HOME GROWN</p>
<p><b>Boneless Hams</b></p> <p><b>\$1.49</b> Lb.</p> <p>Wilson</p> <p>Extra LEAN</p> <p>95% HAM</p> <p>Certified Since 1853</p>	<p><b>Tender Yellow Squash/ Zucchini Squash/ Fresh Green Beans/ Fresh Pickling Cucumbers</b></p> <p><b>69¢</b> Lb.</p>
<p><b>Whole Wilson Corn King</b></p> <p>Gwaltney Big 8 All Meat</p> <p><b>Franks &amp; Bacon</b></p> <p><b>99¢</b> Lb.</p>	<p><b>Grade A Jumbo Pack Chicken Drumsticks &amp; Thighs</b></p> <p><b>69¢</b> Lb.</p>
<p><b>Fresh Colossal Shrimp</b></p> <p><b>\$6.99</b> Lb.</p>	<p><b>Values In Every Aisle</b></p>

**Kellogg's Rice Krispies**

**\$1.59** 15 Oz.

Regularly \$2.73

**Angel Soft**

**2 / \$5**

12 Roll White Bath Tissue

Regularly \$2.89 Each

**Smucker's Grape Jam/Jelly**

**89¢** 32 Oz.

Regularly \$1.29

**Old South Orange Juice**

**99¢** 64 Oz.

Regularly \$1.09

**Pepsi Cola**

**85¢** 5.65

18 Pack/12 Oz. Cans - Pepsi, Diet Pepsi, Mtn. Dew, Diet Mtn. Dew

2 Liter - Diet Pepsi, Crystal Pepsi, Diet Crystal Pepsi, Mtn. Dew, Diet Mtn. Dew, Caffeine Free Pepsi, Caffeine Free Diet Pepsi, 7-Up, Diet 7-Up

**WISE**

**99¢** 7 Oz.

Puffed & Crunchy

**Cheez Doodles**

Regularly \$1.39

Prices in this ad good July 7-13, 1993. We Reserve the right to limit quantities.