

K-State Turf, Sept 25 2008

It has been pretty quiet in the diagnostic lab on the turf front. Some large patch symptoms are becoming visible in a couple of sites in NE Kansas.

Gray leaf spot:

Still no reports of gray leaf spot in turfgrass, our most feared autumn disease. I did have an ornamental grass sample come in from a greenhouse/nursery which had sporulating gray leaf spot.

The fungus that causes gray leaf spot has a wide host range, including rice, wheat, tall fescue, and of course perennial ryegrass. In rice and wheat the disease is called 'blast'. There is a lot of work underway around the world looking at this fungus, since it is the number one yield-reducing disease in rice. Different subgroups of this fungus cause disease on different hosts. For example, the strains that infect rice are a little different from the ones that infect turfgrass or wheat. Some of my colleagues at K-State were recently awarded a grant to study the wheat-phase of this disease. Wheat blast is not known to occur in Kansas, but it is a potential threat to this important crop.

As part of it, we will try to infect wheat in the greenhouse with gray leaf spot strains that I have collected from perennial ryegrass in Kansas to see if our turf strains can move into wheat.

Zoysiagrass update:

You might be aware of K-State research on cold hardiness and other attributes of zoysiagrass. There is an article online at the following link that has a research update:

<http://www.turfgrasstrends.com/>

Click on:

Improved Zoysia Cultivar Could Have Use in Transition Zone

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