

Zoysiagrass Green-up Problems
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The following are common problems associated with zoysiagrass green-up that have been observed this spring.

- 1) **Mowing height** appears to be the most common problem associated with spring transition. In general, scalping is more common in zoysiagrasses. Especially for the denser growth-type cultivars like 'Emerald'. Zoysiagrasses do not tolerate scalping like bermudagrass and as a general observation, zoysiagrasses will be set back anytime they are cut low enough that the black mold under the leaf canopy is visible. This is generally below the node of the growing leaves and can occur at any mowing height, from as low as 0.5 to over 3 inches. Regardless of the normal mowing height, taking the grass down below the node will set it back. Generally, the higher the mowing height, the more this is a problem. Ideally zoysiagrass should be cut at 0.5 to 1.5 inches. Mowing frequency is just as important as mowing height. If more than one-third of the leaf height is removed at a single mowing, the grass will be stressed.
- 2) **Fertility**, 2 pounds of N per 1000 square feet per year is all that is needed by zoysiagrasses. Although higher N rates produce greener grass, it also reduces the slow-growth characteristics of the grass, increases mowing and irrigation requirements, often increases bermudagrass invasion, and will increase thatch and associated problems.
- 3) **Thatch**, as lawns become older thatch becomes more problematic particularly if the turf has been mowed above 2 inches. The effects of increased thatch is slow spring transition and a greater likelihood of disease incidence
- 4) **Water**, either too much or a lack of and even a combination of the two can cause problems for grasses, especially zoysiagrass.
- 5) **Disease**, the most common disease problem during green-up of zoysiagrass is *Rhizoctonia* large patch which appear as large areas of blighted grass. This disease is most active when night temperatures are between 50 and 60 degrees. Under conducive environmental conditions, it is not uncommon for the disease to become first active in the fall and then again in the spring. The typical 'halo' is observable when the disease is active. This disease is controlled by fall and spring applications of ProStar or Heritage. Applications of N immediately before or during active infection will increase disease problems.
- 6) **Cool temperatures**, zoysiagrasses are typically slower to green-up particularly during cool springs like this year.
- 7) **Microclimate**, 'Emerald' zoysiagrass growing north of Atlanta has been killed by the low temperatures in shaded sites that don't get much winter sun.
- 8) **Varietal differences**, there are incidences that suggest multiple types of 'Emerald' exist in the landscape and they green-up at different rates. Cooperative research with the Georgia Crop Improvement Association and Auburn University is underway to evaluate these grass differences.