

RED THREAT TO BRITAIN'S LAWNS

OUR record-breaking summer has brought a red threat to lawns all over Britain.

A dry April followed by a soaking June has caused a fungal disease known as red thread to attack millions of well-kept lawns.

The disease causes unsightly patches to appear on lawns and grass blades sprout red or pink needles.

Red thread thrives in humid conditions and outbreaks have been reported from Devon to the Scottish borders.

But Steve Taylor, technical manager for lawn experts GreenThumb, said: "The combination of a very dry and hot April followed by a wet June has created the ideal conditions to encourage this disease to thrive in lawns.

"We are now seeing a much stronger strain of red thread that creates footprint-shaped damaged patches on the lawn. If closely inspected, you will see a fine red needle coming off the leaf that attaches itself to the blade of grass.

"The whole country seems to be affected from the Scottish Borders and Northern Ireland to Devon, London and Kent."

In the area around Honiton in Devon four out of every ten lawns are reported to be affected by red thread.

While in Wigan, Lancs, GreenThumb expert Ian Johnson says half the lawns in the town have developed the disease.

Red thread can often be treated by applying fertiliser and fungicide to the lawn and dry hot weather will kill it off.

However, June's downpours have left the ground soaked and a warm spell would add to the humidity – making the problem even worse.

GreenThumb, Britain's biggest lawn treatment company, has operators throughout the UK who have been trained to treat red thread fungus. For more details call 0800 0111 222.

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