Top 10 Turf Problems in Northern Utah

Bermudagrass
- Perennial
- Wiry, strong, stem runners above ground
- Creeping below-ground roots
- Herring bone leaf pattern along the stem
- Seed head composed of 3 to 7 finger-like spikes
- Thrives under dry, hot conditions

Bill Bugs
- Causes brown lawn areas, similar to drought
- Grass pulls up easily; often in clumps
- Small, white, legless grubs with an orange-brown head
- Adult is small, black beetle with a snout
- Damage appears in late June through August

Black Medic
- Short lived perennial
- Deep root system
- Leaves resemble clover
- Low growing
- Bright yellow, small, pineapple shaped flower clusters

Crabgrass
- Annual
- Shallow, fibrous root system
- Seed head composed of 3 to 4 finger-like spikes
- Becomes apparent in mid to late summer
- Stems radiate out from a central point
- Becomes a reddish-purple color as weather cools, dies after first frost

Drought
- First symptom is darkening (charcoal-green color) of the lawn
- Prolonged drought causes turf to go dormant and turn straw colored
- Check for drought by inserting a screwdriver into the soil; if too dry it will penetrate no more than about half an inch
- Grass suffering from drought will not pull up easily
- Turf with mild drought stress will green up within an hour of thorough watering
- May take 10 days of proper irrigation to recover from severe drought
Foliar Diseases
- Appear as brown areas in the lawn
- Grass will not pull out easily
- Only a section of the leaf blade will be affected
- Caused by various foliar fungi
- High humidity from frequent irrigation or evening irrigations, where the lawn stays wet for long periods, creates an ideal environment for foliar diseases
- Excessive nitrogen fertilization produces lush growth that is more susceptible

Fairy Ring
- Appears as a ring or arc of darker, lush grass with lighter colored center
- Caused by a fungus growing on organic matter in the soil, forming a mass of white mycelial threads
- Mushrooms (fruiting bodies of the fungus) appear around the edge of the fairy ring during wet periods
- Ring enlarges by 6 to 24 inches each year
- Soil in the center of ring is resistant to water absorption; grass may die during dry weather
- Buried organic matter or thick thatch encourages fairy ring growth
- Overwatering may encourage fairy rings

White Grubs
- Brown lawn areas, similar to drought
- Grass pulls up easily, sod can be rolled back like a carpet
- Birds and skunks often feed in infested areas
- Large, white grub with 6 legs and a brown head
- Grub curls into a “C” when disturbed
- Adults are large beetles

Utah State University is an affirmative action/equal opportunity employer. Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Jack M. Payne, Vice President and Director, Cooperative Extension Service, Utah State University.