

March 1, 2018

## Virus Symptoms

- Splotchy, yellow stretchy spots on leaf blades
- Dead spots streaking on leaf blades
- Unhealthy yellowish tinge and/or dead turfgrass
- Often excessive weeds

## How It Spreads

- Infected grass sap on mower wheels and other lawn trimming equipment
- Occasionally by aphids
- Planting infested sod or sprigs

## Mower Sanitizers

- Virkon S (DuPont) 2% solution spray
- 1 part household bleach with 9 parts water solution spray. Caution: bleach rusts steel.

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## Lethal Viral Necrosis in Palm Beach County

Lethal Viral Necrosis of Floratam St. Augustinegrass (formerly sugarcane mosaic virus - SCMV) was first confirmed in Palm Beach County in western Boynton Beach and Wellington in late 2014. It is now appearing throughout southern Florida. The



*Virus induced streaking on leaf*  
Photo: UF Schall

disease is a complex of two viruses. One of the viruses was known on bermudagrass and likely arrived in Florida on corn. Sugarcane mosaic virus symptoms were seen on St. Augustinegrass lining ditch banks in sugarcane

## What Can You Do?

No pesticide (fungicides, insecticides, etc.) are effective to control the problem. The viruses cannot be transmitted through the soil or reclaimed water. Some management measures include:

- When possible, avoid mowing when the grass is wet because it may enhance pathogen spread.
- Blow plant debris off mowing equipment and tires, spray with sanitizer, and allow to dry after mowing infected lawns.
- Promote the most vigorous growth possible with best

fields in western Palm Beach County in the early 1960's. However, at that time, genome (genetic) testing was not available to confirm virus types.

In recent years, several hundred instances of the virus have been tracked in the St. Petersburg area, with hundreds more mostly in the southeastern counties of Florida.

It kills the Floratam variety of St. Augustinegrass within 3 years. Floratam is by far the most popular variety of St. Augustinegrass in Florida.

Symptoms are visible throughout the year, but necrotic tissue usually appears when air temperatures drop below 65° F.

All other commercially available and tested varieties of St. Augustinegrass are resistant

management practices for fertilization, watering, mowing height and fungal management.



*SCMV induced dead grass*  
Photo: UF Schall

See <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/Ih010>

- Sprig, plug or sod with oth-

er turf varieties, and can be used as alternatives to Floratam. The Classic variety has not been tested yet. Varieties other than Floratam tend to have greater large patch and sometimes other fungal problems.



*Virus induced yellowish, off color lawn and weeds* Photo: UF Schall

The Lethal Viral Necrosis viruses also occur in bermudagrass, paspalum, bahiagrass and crabgrass, but do not kill them. They do not occur in zoysiagrass.

er turf varieties.

- If desired, overseed in the winter with annual or perennial ryegrass when the Floratam may look at its worst.
- If desired, dye damaged Floratam for temporary aesthetics.

For additional information, contact the Palm Beach County Master Gardener Hotline at 561.233.1750 or email [mgardenfwd@pbcgov.org](mailto:mgardenfwd@pbcgov.org) Check out our webpage at: <http://discover.pbcgov.org/coextension/horticulture/Pages/Sugarcane-Mosaic-Virus.aspx>