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## **Be on the Look-out for Bermudagrass Mites**

The bermudagrass mite, *Eriophyes cynodontiensis* is a very tiny arachnid, about 1/125 inches in length (usually microscopic examination at 30-50 power is needed to see the mites). Bermudagrass is the only host for this mite and most damage occurs in coarser Bermudagrass varieties such as Common, Ormond, and St. Lucie. This mite is thought to be native to Australia, but now infests much of the southern U.S.

Bermuda mites are creamy white in color, with two pairs of legs. The females lay eggs under the leaf sheath. After the eggs hatch, they pass through two larval stages before molting into adults. They usually develop from egg to adult in 7-10 days, so large numbers of mites can develop in a short amount of time. All of the life stages can be found under the leaf sheath, and sometimes several hundred mites can be found under one leaf sheath! Unfortunately, these mites can disperse into new areas by the wind, other insects, or grass clippings.

This mite feeds under the leaf sheaths, which causes the grass to yellow and the leaf tips to twist. Then the internodes shorten and tissue swells, so tufts or a rosette appearance develops. The grass then loses its vigor, thins out, and may die. The damage is usually worse in hot and dry weather. When an infestation exists, there is almost no green growth and the tufts become a mass of large knots that die. When this happens, weeds usually invade the area.

### **Some control Options:**

#### **Non-Chemical Controls:**

To manage small infestations, closely mow the grass to a height of 3/4 inch and dispose of all clippings. After mowing, water the turfgrass thoroughly. By keeping the turfgrass healthy, it will help the plants tolerate or outgrow an infestation.

#### **Chemical Controls:**

Chemicals such as trichlorfon, bifenthrin, deltamethrin can be used for control. When bermudagrass is treated with insecticides, it is important to apply a second treatment seven to 10 days later. This second application controls the newly hatched mites. Also thorough treatment of the whole infested area is important.

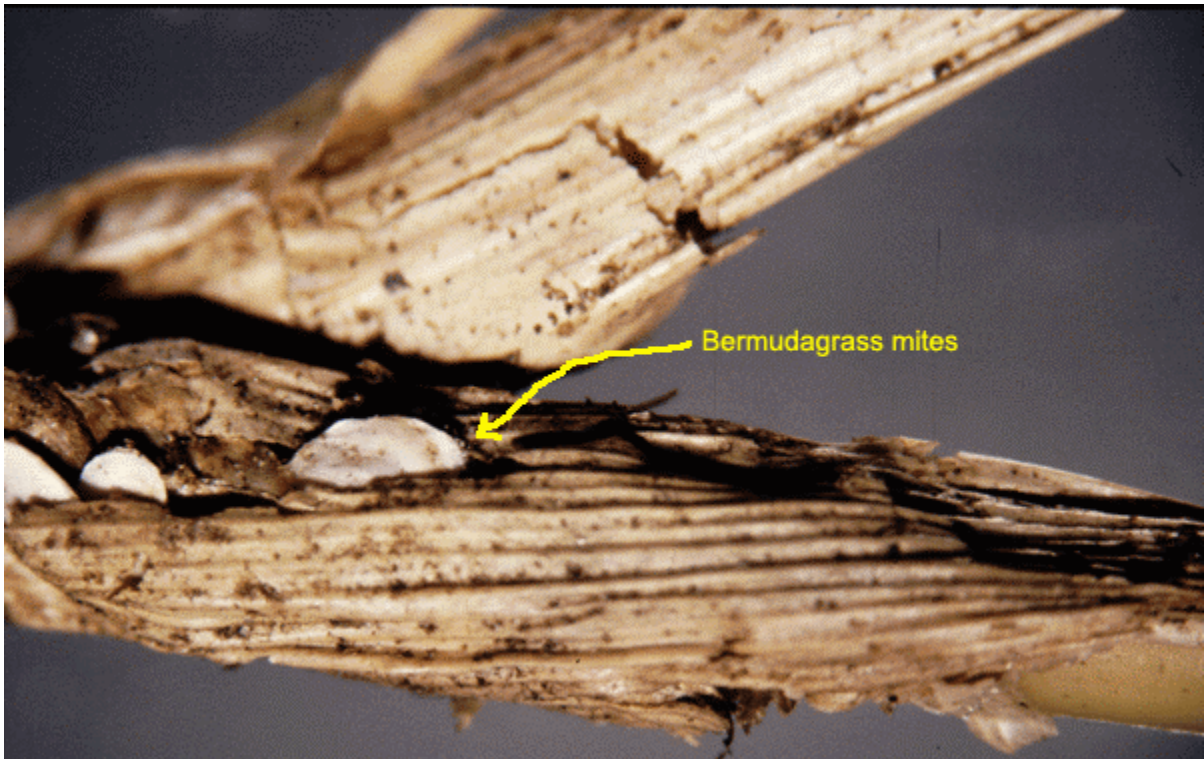


Photo of Bermudagrass mite. Photo from Texas A&M University: <http://aggie-turf.tamu.edu/aggieturf2/insect/images/bermudagrassmites.gif>.

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