

December 5, 2014

## Virus Symptoms

- Splotchy, yellow streaking 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 mowers and other lawn trimming equipment
- Possibly aphids, but not confirmed
- Planting infested sod or sprigs

## Mower Sanitizers

- 1 part PineSol type disinfectant with 3 parts water
- Quaternary ammonia products
- Physan 20
- Lysol
- 1 part household bleach with 9 parts water. Caution: bleach rusts steel.



Palm Beach County  
Board of County Commissioners

University of Florida/Palm Beach County Cooperative Extension  
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Master Gardener Hotline  
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## Sugarcane Mosaic Virus in Palm Beach County

Sugarcane Mosaic Virus (SCMV) was found in November 2014 in western Boynton Beach and Wellington, Florida. We expect it is more widespread within Palm Beach County.

SCMV was first discovered in St. Augustinegrass adjacent



SCMV induced streaking on leaf Photo: UF Schall

to sugarcane fields in the early 1960's. It only caused a slight yellowing to the turf grass. The problem disappeared when resistant sugarcane varieties were developed.

## What Can You Do?

No pesticide (fungicides, insecticides, etc.) are effective to control SCMV. Also, the virus cannot be transmitted through the soil. Some measures to manage SCMV include:

- Avoid mowing when the grass is wet. It facilitates the distribution of the virus containing plant sap.
- Promote the most vigorous growth possible with best management practices for fertilization, watering, mowing height and fungal management. See

<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/lh010>

In recent years, about 250 instances of the virus have been tracked in the St. Petersburg area of Florida.

SCMV appears most destructive on the Floratam variety of St. Augustinegrass. Floratam was introduced in the 1970's as resistant to chinch bugs. It is the most popular variety of St. Augustinegrass in Florida.

SCMV symptoms may be most visible during the fall and winter months when St. Augustinegrass is growing less vigorously. Active turf growth may mask symptoms during summer months.

Bitterblue and Palmetto varieties of St. Augustinegrass are more resistant to SCMV and can be alternatives to Floratam. Bitterblue is not resistant to chinch bugs and Palmetto often has fungal problems.

- Sprig, plug or sod with Bitterblue or Palmetto varieties which hopefully will outcompete the affected Floratam variety.
- If desired, overseed in the winter with annual or peren-



SCMV induced dead grass Photo: UF Schall

Less severe attacks also occur on bermudagrass, paspalum, bahiagrass, fountain grass, and sorghum.

Additional resistant St. Augustinegrass varieties will be assessed over time.

SCMV weakens Floratam so that other problems like take-all rootrot and weeds often develop.



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

nial ryegrass when the Floratam may look at its worst.

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 Phil Harmon, PhD's SCMV publication at: <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/pp313>

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