

## The Different Varieties of WINTER DAMAGE.



Variety #1 – **WINTER KILL** (pictures A & B): For seasons like that of 2011: drought stricken, HOT, and humid & winters with NO snow cover, the chances of winterkill are great. Although we like the warmer temperatures and minimal snowfall, our lawns think otherwise.

The University of Nebraska Lincoln (UNL) **predicted higher than normal winter kill** for the spring of 2012, especially for those that did not water continually the previous year, because of the lack of moisture we experienced after July 2011. And that prediction came true with many lawns suffering with bare, thin, and brown spots, and patchy grass. See: <http://turf.unl.edu/pdfctarticles/janhowmuchwater.pdf> and

<http://turf.unl.edu/pdfctarticles/FebwinterkillandPREherbicides.pdf>. The series of bad weather patterns that we experienced through the 2011 season & the lack of snow cover that winter, led to severe winterkill damage throughout the region. We experienced the driest fall season since the early 1900's. With just .20 inches in the rain gages for the month of September, Sioux Falls and much of KELOLAND set records. Not only did September 2011 go down in the books as the second driest on record, we only had 1.6 inches for August and September combined which is also the driest for the two months combined. (see <http://www.keloland.com/NewsDetail6162.cfm?id=0,121550>).

We also had terrible heat & humidity. In addition to the hot temperatures, humidity levels during this heat wave rose to extreme levels at times. At times dew-point values soared into the 80-83F range, which when combined with temperatures in the 90s to near 100 F, lead to very oppressive heat indices.

[http://www.kdl.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=10776&Itemid=122](http://www.kdl.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=10776&Itemid=122). Because of this, many lawns were dormant or extremely stressed as they went into the winter months, relying on already short water reserves. It soon froze and we didn't have sustainable snow cover

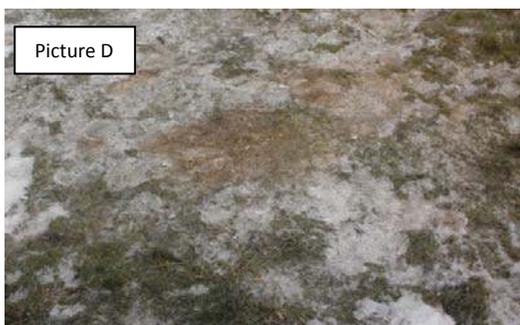


to replenish the water reservoirs or to provide protection for the grass. The snow cover we did receive was short lived and it was already too little too late. Most common areas affected are elevated burm-type areas, exposed areas, front yards & other areas along sidewalks & driveways and areas will need to be re-established by seed or sod.

**To help prevent losing your grass to winterkill, water 2x/week, ½" each time when rainfall doesn't happen. Otherwise our bluegrass lawns will start to go dormant if 1" of water per week is not provided and will start to die if there is not 1" of water received in a 4 week period.**



Variety #2 – **SALT DAMAGE** (picture C): In South Dakota, our winters can be long and grueling. In order for us to drive safely on icy, snowy roads, salt and gravel needs to be applied to the roads. When snow plows come through to clear the snow from the road, some of this salt and gravel gets plowed onto our boulevards. This salt changes the Ph of the soil and can cause grass dieback and/or thinning. This now opens up the area to weeds because it's not a lush, healthy lawn. Over-seeding can help if the area is extremely bare.



Variety #3 – **SNOW MOLD** (picture D): To avoid the slimy, crusty, mold substance on your grass in early spring, mow short the last mowing of the season and pick up leaves and pet waste before the snow falls. If left tall, the grass will fold over itself under the snow & that creates a perfect environment for mold to grow. There are 2 varieties of snow mold: white and pink. WHITE snow mold damage typically puts a lawn 3-4 weeks behind schedule PINK snow mold is typically more damaging to the lawn & can kill the grass.