FIX THE STRESS FIRST. PREVENT, DON'T CHASE.

Take-All Root Rot in St. Augustine

A homeowner's guide for San Angelo and Central West Texas

Take-all root rot is a soil fungus common in Texas lawns. It rots roots and runners when St. Augustine is stressed, often showing at spring green-up or in summer heat. Lawn care comes first; fungicides protect, they don't cure.

1 · CONFIRM IT

Look at the roots, not just the leaves

- **Signs:** yellow leaves, then thinning, irregular brown patches 1 ft to 20+ ft across.
- **Pull test:** tug runners at a patch edge. Take-all roots are short, black and rotted.
- **Look-alikes:** brown/large patch, chinch bugs, grubs and iron yellowing need other treatments.



Photo: BES-TEX Supply

2 · FIX THE STRESS

Lawn care comes first

Never lime a take-all lawn. High pH favors the fungus.

M Mow high

St. Augustine at 3–4 in, the top setting or one notch below. Never scalp.

W Water deep, less often

Fix drainage, low spots and overwatering. Wet areas stay prone.

F Feed lightly

Use ammonium-based nitrogen, no more than 1 lb N per 1,000 sq ft per feeding.

A Aerate & dethatch

Core-aerate while the grass is growing. Thin thatch thicker than ½ in.

3 · RESEARCH: PEAT MOSS TOPDRESSING

Spread about one 3.8 cu ft bale of sphagnum peat moss per 1,000 sq ft, once or twice a year. In Texas A&M trials on Dallas lawns, peat protected St. Augustine for about two years.

Prefer not to use peat? Ask about Carboniz PN, a compost and biochar soil enhancer sold as a peat alternative. A 40 lb bag covers up to 2,000 sq ft. This is a product option, not take-all research.

Limited evidence: one small set of Dallas studies, best timing never tested, and it may wear off faster on our alkaline West Texas soils.

FROM OUR COUNTER: BES-TEX EXPERIENCE, NOT RESEARCH

- **Our soils:** San Angelo lawns typically run pH 8–8.5, and St. Augustine struggles there.
- **pH Master 6-0-2 (50% sulfur including elemental sulfur, 10% iron, ammonium nitrogen):** a product we like. Apply in January–February: sulfur can go down any month here, and January gets it into the soil ahead of busy April. The elemental sulfur is what can acidify; sulfur works slowly, over months, so it needs a head start. Its ammonium-sulfate nitrogen fits our ammonium-nitrogen advice. Bag rate: about 50 lb per 3,000 sq ft (about 17 lb per 1,000 sq ft).
- **Peat moss:** we stock 3.8 cu ft bales. The research rate is one bale per 1,000 sq ft; at the counter we think that's on the light side.
- **Carboniz PN (50% compost, 50% biochar):** a counter favorite, sold as a peat alternative. Its label says it conditions soil and adds organic matter, at 20–40 lb per 1,000 sq ft on lawns. It is not a fungicide.

4 · FUNGICIDES

Fungicides prevent. They don't cure.

- **Best before symptoms.** Results are inconsistent once grass is yellow; no fungicide brings back dead grass.
- **Azoxystrobin has the best research support.** We carry Heritage G (0.31% azoxystrobin granules). Its home-lawn directions list take-all patch at 2–4 lb per 1,000 sq ft, 28 days apart, and name St. Augustine.
- **Skip straight propiconazole for take-all.** It showed no benefit on Dallas St. Augustine lawns. Combo granules like Strobe Pro G (azoxystrobin + propiconazole) are labeled for take-all patch, but adding propiconazole gave no extra benefit there.
- **Water it in right away** with ¼–½ in of water so it reaches the roots (Texas A&M). Liquid azoxystrobin needs a calibrated sprayer; ask at the counter.

The label is the law. Read and follow the label on the bag in hand.

5 · SAN ANGELO TIMING (ESTIMATE)

When to apply

Fall 2 applications, mid-September to late October, 28 days apart

Spring 2 applications after green-up, 28 days apart (label: typically April–May)

Our estimate: there is no San Angelo soil-temperature data, and every Texas field trial was in Dallas. A soil thermometer at 2 in helps: research starts fall sprays as soil cools to about 86°F and continues while it is 68–86°F.

Bring a picture or a sample.

Bring photos, or a patch-edge sample with roots and soil in a zip-top bag, to 4512 Adobe Dr. We'll look at it with you before you buy anything.

Call 325.653.1300

Sources: Texas A&M AgriLife Extension; Colbaugh et al., Texas A&M Dallas peat moss studies (2003, 2005); EPA labels: Heritage G 100-1323 (2025), Strobe Pro G 53883-440 (2024).