Urine Burn Solutions

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Solutions for Urine Burns on Lawns Solutions for Urine Burns on Lawns

If you have a dog and a lawn then you've probably experienced the unsightly yellow spots caused from the urine killing the grass in your yard. These problems are more common in households with large female dogs with well-kept lawns. However, they can show up even in lawns where the weeds outnumber the grass and the neighbors sympathetically drop off "care packages" containing fertilizer and weed killer.

There are lots of old "theories" circulating about just what in the urine causes the killing off of your prized Bermuda grass. The most common of these misguided opinions is that the urine is acidic and 'burns' the grass. As a result, a host of home remedies have arisen to change the pH of the urine. These measures rarely work because the real culprit in urine burns is nitrogen.

Because dogs are carnivores and eat a high level of protein in their diet, they break the protein down and excrete it as nitrogen in the urine. The result is a killing of the grass from an overload of nitrogen. You will get the same kind of burn if you put a concentrated handful of fertilizer in one spot. These urine burns will often have a characteristic green ring around the outside edge where the urine was dilute enough to actually work as a fertilizer. This characteristic ring can also help distinguish urine burns from a grub infestation that will also create similarly looking brown spots.

There are a few things that make urine burns more prevalent:

- Urine burns tend to be worse with female dogs because they squat and deposit their urine in one place.
- They also are worse in large dogs because they deposit a larger quantity of urine.
- They are worse on yards that are already fertilized regularly.
- Grasses like bluegrass or Bermuda grass are much more sensitive to nitrogen than rye or fescue.
- Lawns that are stressed from drought or disease, or those that are recently sodded or seeded are more susceptible to lawn burn.
- And finally, they are always worse when your neighbor's dog goes on your yard!

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So now that we are seeing spots what do we do to get rid of them?

Home remedies that help some of the time include:

- **Diluting the urine through increasing water consumption.** Adding water to the food or adding non-salted broth to the drinking water may help. Canned food has a lot more water in it but it also has its drawbacks.
- **Feeding a high quality diet** may also help since the protein is more digestible and there are fewer waste products.
- **Watering the yard** daily helps in some cases but it may not be enough.
- **Backing off the fertilizer** on your yard may help as well.
- Try planting some **tougher species** like rye or fescue.

We also have oral products that you can add to your dog's diet. Green-UM is a natural blend of amino acids and herbs that binds up free nitrogen in the urine and neutralizes it. Our Drs. Foster & Smith Lawn Guard® Tablets or Treats contain *Yucca Schidigera* which binds ammonia in the urine. Green-UM Xtra also contains helpful bacteria and green tea extracts that break down nitrogen wastes. All of these products work well when combined with some of the remedies listed above.

Because these products contain different formulations and ingredients, one may work better on your particular pet than another. If you're not satisfied with the results of one, you may want to consider one of the other alternatives. Regardless of your type of grass or dog, by following some of these basic guidelines you should be able to get a handle on these troublesome yellow spots in no time. As for the weeds, we'll save that for another time.

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