

Ann Arbor News “Your World” Submission for 7.24.06

MSU Extension agents report that Japanese beetles and European chafers – two non-native insects commonly responsible for lawn and garden damage – are on the rise in Michigan.

Although the European chafer does not feed on plants as an adult, it is hard to miss the Japanese beetle as it turns the leaves of our favorite ornamentals into lace by consuming the tissue between the veins. Yet, both of these insects spend the majority of their lives in the larval stage (as grubs) where they feed on the tender roots of turfgrass.

Grub activity is often first noticed in early spring as animals begin to dig in your lawn, flipping over turf in search of insects. As the season progresses, you may notice large, discolored areas of lawn, which if explored underground, may reveal $\frac{3}{4}$ inch long, white, c-shaped grubs feeding around the edges of the dead patches. Please visit www.ipm.msu.edu for identification tips.

At this point in the summer, the adult beetles have emerged from the soil, fed on the leaves of your plants, and are getting ready to lay their eggs. If you saw beetles by the dozens in June, you may want to use preventative measures in late July to target the young grubs as they hatch.

There are usually several management options for solving any pest or disease problem. Use the non-pesticide approach whenever possible, saving pesticide use as the last line of defense. The best way to save a grub-infested lawn is to properly irrigate – daily watering promotes grass growth and counteracts root damage caused by grubs.

If you chose to use a biological or chemical control method, consider the life cycle of the pest and the proper timing of application. Due to the overwhelming variety of lawn care products available in stores, check the bag to determine what active ingredient the product contains. Some chemicals are only effective at certain points in the season so seek advice if you are unsure about which product to buy.

For advice, please call the Washtenaw County Master Gardener Hotline at 734-997-1819 Monday through Friday 9am–12pm and 1-4pm. Open April – October, the hotline is staffed by trained volunteers who can answer all of your lawn and garden questions.

Submitted by:

Joanna Smither, Program Assistant
Washtenaw County Planning and Environment
Phone: 734-222-6874
Email: smitherj@ewashtenaw.org
Website: <http://recycle.ewashtenaw.org>