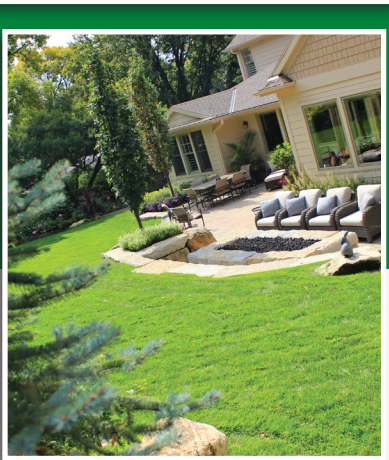
Control White Grubs in Turf

Treat Them With Bayer Dylox Granules



What are white grubs?

White grubs are one of the most destructive insect pests of turf-grass. Grubs are the larvae of beetles collectively referred to as scarabs. In Nebraska, the two most common scarab beetles are masked chafers (annual grubs) and May-June beetles (3 year grubs). The adult tan beetles are approximately ¾-1" in length. They are attracted to night lighting around porch lights, street lights, or large glass windows. The adults, usually present from mid-June through late July and do not damage turf. During this period, the egg laying females drop eggs into vigorous, well-watered turf in sunny locations. Rarely are eggs deposited in the shade of trees or structures. Tiny grubs hatch in late July through mid-August. Most damage does not occur until the grubs reach a more mature state in mid-August through September.

What to look for

The first evidence of grub activity is small, discolored patches of dying grass that may be mistaken as fungus or moisture stress. More severe damage later in the season results in turf that can be easily pulled up. The cream-colored grubs would be visible on the exposed soil. They have a reddish-brown head, a c-shaped body, and three pairs of short legs immediately behind the head. Larvae can reach one inch in length.

Once soils cool, the grubs move deep into the soil for the winter. In the spring, they move to the surface, feed for a short time, pupate, and emerge as a beetle to begin a new cycle. No chemical control is needed during this spring period.

Prevention of grubs

The most satisfactory approach is a preventative program. An application of granulated Imidacloprid (Merit, Grub Free Zone) should be applied late May through July 4th. A minimum of ½" of water should deliver the granules into the soil where the eggs have been laid. If thatch is over ½" thick, aeration prior to the insecticide application may be necessary. If the insecticide is unable to get into the soil to 1-2" depth, it cannot perform.

Damage control

If a preventative program was not followed and active grubs exist in the soil, an application of granulated Dylox (Kill-A-Grub) is necessary. This fast acting insecticide makes the grubs sick within 48 hours of application. Some grubs will remain alive in the soil, but the population will be reduced to a manageable level. A light application of lawn fertilizer at the same time as the insecticide application will help encourage re-growth of the damaged turf. Severe damage will require reseeding or sodding the areas.

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