

GRUBS IN TURF

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 most common are masked chafers (annual grubs), May-June beetles (3 year grubs), and Japanese beetles. The adults, usually present from mid-June through late July do not damage turf, but may feed on foliage on plants. 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 *Fertilome Grub Free Zone* should be applied by July 4th. A minimum of 1/2" of water should deliver the granules into the soil where the eggs have been laid. If thatch is over 1/2" thick, aeration prior to the insecticide application may be necessary. If the insecticide is unable to get into the soil 1-2" depth, it cannot perform.



Damage Control

If a preventative program was not followed and active grubs exist in the soil, a September application of granulated *Bioadvanced Grub Killer Plus* is necessary. This fast acting insecticide makes the grubs sick within 48 hours of application. 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.

