

THE GREEN LINE

THE FIGHT AGAINST WHITE GRUBS: WHAT CAN I DO?

Every year without fail, many people find their lawns infested with **white grubs**. Despite the lawn treatments carried out by external companies and your careful and meticulous gardening, white grubs always return in full force. **Why?**

PESTICIDES: NOT A LONG-TERM SOLUTION

Many certified contractors might suggest the use of pesticides, but it's important to understand that pesticides are only effective when the white grubs are in their 3rd larval stage and just below the soil surface (from April to mid-May and from September to October, depending on the species). A pesticide treatment outside of these periods is useless.

Please note that the Town of Mount Royal now prohibits the use of pesticides categorized as neonicotinoids (e.g. MERITTM). The only authorized biopesticide that may be used to control white grubs is a solution containing **nematodes**. Nematodes are microscopic worms that are harmless to other organisms, but specifically attack and parasitize white grubs. For a nematode solution to be effective, it must be applied according to the directions. It might take two years of treatment before the grubs are completely eradicated.

Regardless of which product you use on your lawn, pesticides are not a long-term solution. As long as other more obvious problems persist (e.g. lack of biodiversity, mowing short, etc.), your white grub infestation will return cyclically.

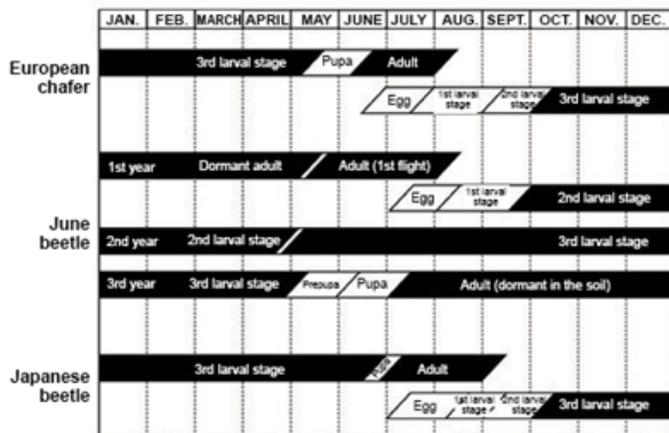


Image source: Government of Ontario

WHITE GRUBS

White grubs are the larvae of the **June beetle**, the **European chafer** and the **Japanese beetle**. They're mostly found on lawns and their effects usually go unnoticed. However, when you have too many white grubs, your lawn begins to suffer and show obvious signs of infestation: the lawn takes on a yellow shade and can easily be lifted like a carpet, and is ravaged by skunks and raccoons, etc.

You need to understand the white grub's life cycle to fight them effectively.

MONOCULTURE: A FEAST FOR WHITE GRUBS

The vast majority of lawns consist solely of Kentucky bluegrass. This species of turf is intolerant to dry conditions, shade and many urban stressors. Not only does your lawn offer little resistance against environmental disruption, it also serves up an all-you-can-eat buffet of roots, which the hungry white grubs go crazy for.

Solutions:

- 1- Diversify your lawn. There are many seed mixes that offer a good variety of species, including creeping red fescue, perennial ryegrass, hard fescue, etc.
- 2- Plant clover. White grubs can't stand red or white clover. What's more, clover fixes nitrogen and helps bluegrass turf withstand dry conditions. If the soil is rich and well-balanced, clover won't take over your lawn.

A HEALTHY AND THICK LAWN

The longer your turf, the healthier its root system. When you cut your lawn too short, it weakens the turf. The grass uses all its energy trying to grow new blades instead of building its root system and constantly needs to be watered to stay green. The deeper and healthier the lawn's roots, the better it can resist dry conditions and white grub infestations.

You should also fertilize your soil to ensure good nutrient supply and improve water retention. It will go a long way to making your soil richer and your lawn healthier.

Solutions:

- 1- Keep your grass tall (2½ - 3 inches high).
- 2- Add a soil amendment to your lawn every year, along with compost or good quality topsoil.
- 3- Seed your lawn with diverse seeds, especially as soon as there are bare spots.
- 4- Leave mowing residues on your lawn instead of removing them. As they decompose, they'll enrich your soil (grasscycling/natural DIY compost).

OUTDOOR LIGHTS

Beetles are nocturnal insects. When they emerge from their larval state in June and late August, they're instinctively attracted to light. They'll even mate and lay eggs very near a light source.

Solution: Turn off your outdoor lights from the end of May until the beginning of September.

WHAT ABOUT JAPANESE BEETLES?

Many insecticides are sold in stores to help control Japanese beetle populations. However, none are truly effective. The best way to protect your plants against the ravages of Japanese beetles is by installing traps. N.B.: Traps must be placed far from your flower beds (to avoid attracting more beetles).

Green Line

Technical Coordinator - Environment
180 Clyde Road
Mount Royal H3P 3J9
Phone: 514 734-4222