

Grubs



Home lawn areas in Pennsylvania often are subject to severe and extensive injury by the larval stages (grubs) of various species of scarab beetles. Japanese beetles and northern masked chafer grubs are the predominant damaging white grub species associated with home lawns. Several other white grub species including Asiatic garden beetle, European chafer, green June beetle, May and June beetles, and Oriental beetle are occasionally observed in home lawns and may cause significant damage.

The life history of the beetles mentioned above is completed in 12 months. The adult beetle lays its eggs in the ground during the summer. As soon as the grubs hatch, they start feeding on the roots until cold weather drives them two to eight inches deeper into the soil where they overwinter. When warm weather arrives in the spring, the grubs move up from the lower soil regions and resume feeding near the surface until they become mature and pupate from May through early-June. Adult northern masked chafers, which are active at night, and Japanese beetles can emerge in central Pennsylvania from mid-June through mid-July. Later emergence can occur and is dependent on local weather conditions.

Heavy white grub infestations can destroy grass roots, causing the affected area to become spongy, which allows the sod to be rolled back like a piece of carpet. Evidence of grub damage, including patches of dead or dying turf, are visible during late summer and fall (September and October) A good indication of a grub infestation is the presence of skunks or birds feeding on turf. Damage can be avoided with a preventative applied in the spring.

