

Managing Grubs

Grubs are feared by many as a costly and devastating thing to happen to your lawn. However, that is not the case. If found early on in the infestation, the costs can be kept down. If the problem gets out of hand though, then it can become a costly problem.

What are the Signs of a Grub Problem?

Dry spots in the spring and fall when there is ample amounts of water available to the lawn are the key indicators that there may be a grub problem.

Another good indicator is if your lawn is easily torn by walking on it or mowing it. Since the grubs are interested in the roots of the grass plant, there is nothing holding the grass in the soil, and it will easily be torn.

If you notice that skunks are digging in your lawn, it is a good indicator of a grub problem, however skunks do not always happen with grubs. Skunks will pull the grass back, and you will see small dug up areas where the skunks were finding a snack. A thing to watch for though is in the fall, squirrels will also tear up grass, but they are burying acorns, not looking for grubs.

Moles will eat grubs, but having a mole problem is not an indication of a grub problem. If you have a mole problem, it is best to treat for moles and not grubs.

What are grubs? What is Their Life Cycle?

There are two types of grubs that damage turf grass, European Chaffer and Japanese beetle. European Chaffers are only found in non-irrigated turf, and Japanese beetles are only found in irrigated turf. Both are grubs and can be treated the same manner.

The life cycle of a grub starts in the mid to late summer as an egg. They hatch and now we have little grubs. They continue to grow into the fall. They will over-winter by burrowing deeper into the soil. Once spring arrives, they head back closer to the soil surface. Once we get into late spring and early summer, the grubs start to change (molt) into beetles. And by early to mid-summer, we have European Chaffer and Japanese beetles flying around. They are looking for a mate. Once they are ready to lay their eggs, they would like to return to where they

were born to lay their eggs. Once the eggs are laid, the cycle starts all over again.

When the beetles are in grub form, they feed on roots of grass plants. This is what causes the damage to your lawn.

As a side note, just because you see beetles around your house in the summer, that does not necessarily mean you will get grubs.

What are my Treatment Options?

Treating for grubs is typically a two-step process. The first step is to get the grub population down below damaging levels. The second step is to stop the beetles from coming back to your lawn to lay their eggs.

The first step should be done once a grub infestation is discovered. This step kills the grubs on contact, but the product needs to be watered into the lawn shortly after the application for it to work. It will not kill all of the grubs in the lawn, but it will bring the population below damaging levels for your lawn.

The second step comes in the summer, typically around the Fourth of July, give or take a few weeks. This step stops the beetles from laying their eggs back in your lawn. This application should result in having no grubs in your lawn. This step needs to be done to keep the grubs from coming back in your lawn.

What About Repairing My Lawn?

If the damage caused by the grubs is relatively isolated, and the skunks have not been digging, then there is a good probability that your lawn will recover on its own. However, in areas with an extensive grub population, or excessive digging by skunks, your lawn may need to be repaired with new grass seed.

Contact Us with Any Questions

If you think that you have grubs, please contact us at (616) 534-4013 or visit us at www.harkeslandscape.com. We are happy to answer any questions that you may have, inspect any problem areas in your lawn, and offer a price to have the problems treated.