

My lawn is damaged - is it grubs?

White grub damage appears as dead patches (often distressingly large) on lawn areas, and is most severe in the fall and spring. Damaged areas will feel soft and spongy when you walk on them before the grass actually dies. The affected areas lift easily because the roots of the grasses have been eaten by the grubs.



You will often find the C- shaped white grubs under the areas that you lift. Five or more grubs per 0.1 m² (10 cm²) are enough to seriously damage lawns that are not irrigated. Raccoons, skunks and other small mammals may cause secondary damage on infested lawns by digging up turf searching for a meal of grubs.

How do I manage white grubs, without resorting to chemical pesticides?

- Healthy, vigorous lawns are able to tolerate grub feeding. They have a larger root system, and root tissue lost to grub feeding can be replaced. Correct cultural practice and adequate irrigation of turf areas (at least 2.5 cm per week) will minimize damage to grass even if grubs are present. Frequent, short watering is actually detrimental to your lawn, so try to stick to weekly deep watering to stimulate strong root growth. Aeration in the spring and a scheduled fertilization program throughout the summer will all contribute to a healthy vigorous lawn.
- Adult beetles prefer to lay their eggs into grass areas. One option is to replace damaged turf with other types of plants. A variety of beautiful ground covers are available at local retailers.
- Since chemical pesticides are banned in Beaconsfield, you must rely on biological measures to cope with the grub problem.
- Parasitic nematodes are widely available for use on lawns to manage white grub populations. These are microscopic worms, which kill both June Beetle and European Chafer larvae. The **late August** application of nematodes is the most crucial and effective time to keep grubs in check. Talk to the experts at your local nursery and read directions and rates of application carefully before applying nematodes to your lawn.

You may want to consider **going green** with your lawn. Many garden centres are now carrying hardier varieties and blends of ground cover that are much more pest resistant, such as fescue grass, clover and other blends. These types of grass do not require nearly as much watering or mowing. The environmental impact of maintaining a traditional lawn (water usage, noise and air pollution from mowers, fertilizers that leech into our rivers and lakes) is substantial. Consider re-seeding next year with some of the alternative types of hardy grasses available and save on lawn maintenance costs while having less of an impact on our environment.

Have a great summer! Libby, Sean & Catherine