



# WHITE GRUB

## PREVENTION & CONTROL

### MEET THE PEST

White grubs, the larval stage of June beetles, are common lawn pests in Nova Scotia. This insect is off-white in color with a light brown head. Three pairs of legs are found close to the head of this 1/2 inch (3 3/4 cm) grub. At rest, white grubs can be found curled up, in the soil, close to the surface. The adult (June beetle) is a shiny, one inch (2.5 cm), brown beetle with long, spiny legs.

White grubs live in the soil and feed on grass roots, the roots of farm and garden crops and potato tubers. In lawn turf, white grub feeding results in thin, dry looking patches of turf which may be invaded by broadleaf weeds (e.g., plantain, dandelion). The adult June beetle feeds on flowers.

### LIFE CYCLE

June beetles have a three year life-cycle and cause most damage in the second year. In June, the adult lays eggs in the soil and within two weeks the white grubs emerge. They feed on the grass roots during the warm summer months and then move deep into the soil to overwinter. Early the following summer, the grubs move close to the soil surface and begin feeding again. After a short feeding period during the third summer, the white grub pupates and turns into the adult beetle. The adult overwinters in soil and lays eggs the following summer, thus completing its life cycle.

When June beetles are numerous, the potential exists for white grubs to cause extensive damage throughout the following two summers. In the case of severe infestations, the turf in the affected area can be pulled up like a piece of sod. Foraging animals such as

skunks and racoons and even crows may compound grub damage by digging in the lawn to find the insects.

### CONTROL

#### Physical

A healthy lawn is the best protection against white grubs. A well-watered, fertilized, aerated lawn is better able to withstand some level of feeding damage from white grubs. Maintaining good root growth and healthy grass helps reduce white grub problems as the adults prefer to lay their eggs in thin grass.



#### Biological

Products containing microscopic, parasitic nematodes may be purchased from garden centers to help control white grubs. These nematode products are mixed with water and sprayed on the lawn. In general, the treatment area should be irrigated before application of the nematodes as nematodes move by swimming through the soil water.

#### Chemical

If physical and biological control measures are not effective, use a pesticide which will have a minimal impact on both you and the environment.

If the above measures are not effective, consult with an expert at a garden center for pesticides available.

**Always use a registered domestic class pest control product labeled for white grub control and carefully follow the label directions.**

*Fact sheet adapted from the Backyard Bug Brigade, White Grubs - published Atlantic Provincial Environment Departments, PEI Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and Environment Canada. Revised April, 2001 by Nova Scotia Department of Environment and Labour.*