

How do I prevent damage to my lawn from the European chafer?

Maintaining a healthy lawn is your first line of defense against grubs. Healthy, vigorously growing lawns can tolerate more grub feeding, because they generally have more extensive root systems.

1. In the Spring, remove excess thatch (if greater than 1 cm or 0.5 in). Aerate compacted soils to ensure that air and water are reaching your lawn.
2. Apply a top-dressing of compost mixed with sand. Overseed using a mix of deep-rooting grasses, such as fescue and rye grass which are more drought-tolerant and require less watering. Water the newly seeded area thoroughly. During the summer sprinkling restriction period, permits for watering a newly established lawn may be obtained from the City of Burnaby Engineering Department.
3. Consider replacing lawn in hard-to-grow areas, with alternative groundcovers such as kinnikinnick or salal that may deter the beetle.
4. Water an established lawn deeply yet infrequently to encourage the growth of a deep-rooted, drought-tolerant lawn. Water no more than once per week until 2.5 cm or 1 in collects in a container placed on your lawn. Rainfall can substitute the need for watering.
5. Raise your mowing height to 6 to 9 cm or 2.5 to 3 in, since beetles prefer laying eggs on closely cropped lawns. Higher grass blades will also help to protect the soil surface from water loss during the summer, and encourage deeper root growth.
6. In chafer infested areas, some residents have had success with the use of plastic sheeting, tarps or landscape fabric to cover their lawns before dusk (approximately 9 pm) in June and July when the adult beetles are most active. A cover may prevent mated females from laying eggs in your turf and repeating the cycle.
7. Adult beetles may be vacuumed, hand picked, or shaken from plants into a cloth in the morning when they are still sluggish. Collected beetles may be drowned in soapy water.

How do I manage the problem if I already have lawn damage?

1. In areas where turf damage has occurred, cultivate (rototill) the soil thoroughly to expose grubs to predators and weather. Leave the soil fallow (unseeded) until skunks, racoons and birds have stopped feeding. These small animals should be tolerated on your property, as they are a naturally controlling the European chafer population.
2. Dead turf can be incorporated into the soil to add nitrogen. Alternately, small amounts of turf **without soil** can be bagged as

green waste for pick-up in your weekly yard waste collection program. Ensure that contractors do not dispose of topsoil, which may cause the European chafer to spread to other areas. All topsoil should be left in place to help re-establish a new lawn or ground-cover in the affected area.

3. Break-down clumps of soil, and rake out the rototilled area. Apply a top-dressing of compost mixed with sand, and overseed with an appropriate grass mixture. Water the newly-seeded area thoroughly.
4. Avoid the use of pesticides that will only provide a temporary solution, and which may contaminate ground and surface waters. Pesticides may also be harmful to beneficial insects in your yard such as bees and earthworms.
5. Visit your local gardening centre for other suggestions or advice on maintaining your lawn, or replacing it with alternative ground covers.

What is the City doing about the European chafer?

In 2004, the City is contributing to a study that will test the effectiveness of various biological treatment options, such as nematodes (or round worms) in controlling European chafer

grubs. Recommendations for effective biological control agents will be made available to residents in the Spring of 2005. The City will also be evaluating cost-effective options for replacing or maintaining turf in chafer-infested parks and boulevards.

European chafer is here to stay, and it may be several years before an effective control strategy can be achieved. In the meantime, preventative approaches, such as healthy lawn maintenance, may be the key to a pest-free lawn.

Additional Resources

Effective Control of White Grubs
(Health Canada)
www.grubs.ca/european-chafer.html

Healthy Lawns (Health Canada)
www.healthylawns.ca

Organic Grub Control (Living Green)
www.livinggreen.info/library/organic_grub_control.cfm

Contact Us

For other inquiries, or to report the European chafer:

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Information on the

European Chafer Turf Pest

The European chafer is a new turf pest to our region and was first identified in New Westminster in 2001. It is currently spreading westward into Burnaby, appearing in lawns and boulevards throughout the southern part of the City.

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Read more to find out ways of protecting your property from European chafer beetle infestation.



