



## Going after grubs in your lawn



Landscaping is a rewarding hobby for many homeowners. Men and women with green thumbs often take pride in their lush lawns and gardens, feeling a sense of accomplishment as their landscapes spend spring and summer returning to form and making yards more inviting spaces to spend relaxing summer nights.

But even the most well-maintained lawns are not immune to problems that can compromise all the hard work men and women put into their lawns. One such problem many homeowners encounter is a grub infestation.

Grubs are a type of pest that can cause considerable damage to lawns, and while many homeowners have no doubt heard of grubs, they might want to learn more about these pesky pests so they know what to do should grubs ever appear in their yards.

### What are grubs?

Grubs are insects that live in the soil, where they feed on grass and roots. Many grubs are the larva of Japanese beetles, and those beetles typically lay their eggs in sun-drenched areas of lawns in midsummer.

### What are signs of grub damage?

Grubs not only damage lawns on their own, but they serve as food sources for local wildlife as well, attracting wildlife, which can do its own damage to lawns.

Lawns can turn brown for a variety of reasons, and grubs are just one of many potential culprits behind the browning of once-luscious landscapes. Grubs feed on roots, so homeowners who suspect their lawns have fallen victim to grub infestation

can pull up the areas where grass has turned brown to see if there are any grubs, which look like worms.

Landscapes that have suddenly become popular among local wildlife that is digging up lawns may also be infested with grubs. Skunks and raccoons feed on grubs, and may dig up lawns where grubs are present.

Damage resulting from grub infestation is most visible from late summer to early fall.

### Can grub damage be prevented?

Preventing grub infestation typically requires homeowners to keep watchful eyes on their lawns. Pay particular attention to areas that begin to brown, especially areas that are turning brown in spite of adequate watering. An early indicator of a grub infestation is small grubs around the roots of grass. In such instances, applying insecticide may be enough to prevent a small grub problem from spreading.

Insecticides also can be an effective preventative

measure for homeowners looking to avoid grub infestations. Speak with a local landscaping professional for recommendations about which insecticide to apply and how best to apply it.

### What can I do about grub damage?

Attempting to treat grubs in the spring may be ineffective, as grubs are large and no longer feeding in spring. So homeowners dealing with grub infestations should address the situation before they retire their green thumbs for the winter. Remove debris from grub infestations with a rake before watering the affected areas. Watering can help some damaged roots recover, but areas that have been especially damaged may need to be reseeded.

Grub infestations can be a nuisance to homeowners who put lots of time and effort into their lawns. But homeowners can take steps to treat such infestations and prevent them from returning the following summer.

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## Did you know?

Damage to a lawn may be indicative of various problems. Everything from insects to rodents to the family pet may be responsible for causing burnt patches, holes and other eyesores. Getting to the bottom of the problem is the first step in remediation. Burning and discoloration of the lawn is often a result of high concentrations of dog urine pooling in one area. Diluting the urine by hosing down areas of the lawn can clear up many problems. Birds, raccoons, skunks, moles, and other rodents may feed on grubs that reside just under the thatch of the lawn, and animals may tear up lawns in search of this delicacy. Treating the grub problem usually alleviates damage caused by animals. Mole crickets are another common lawn destroyer. These insects resemble crickets, but they burrow beneath the turf to feed on plant roots. The mole crickets can push up channels of turf as they burrow, exposing roots to the elements and causing the grass to die. Getting rid of the insects can revitalize the lawn.

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## Veggie garden tips for beginners

Planting a vegetable garden can be a worthwhile endeavor for anyone who has an available patch of land. Gardens need not take up much space, and even apartment dwellers without yards can plant small gardens in containers they place on terraces or window boxes.

One of the first decisions novice gardeners must make is which crops to grow. This will help determine how much land you will need and which supplies or soil amendments will be necessary. According to The Old Farmer's Almanac, a common error for beginners is planting too much and more than anyone could ever consume, so it's best to start small and be proud of that small garden.

Locate your garden in an area that gets adequate sun. Many vegetables need

between six and eight hours of sunlight per day. Without enough light, they will not bear as much and could be susceptible to insect infestation. Vegetables and fruit also need plenty of water because they're not very drought-tolerant, so keep gardens close to a water source.

Soil preparation is also key. Till the soil and remove debris like rocks, sticks and hard clumps of dirt. Work with organic material, such as manure or compost. Apply mulch after planting to help maintain moisture levels in the soil.

Plant the tallest crops at the rear of your garden bed. Work forward with shorter crops. Try to leave a foot or more between planting rows.

It's easy to get a garden started and enjoy fresh food for many months to come.

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## Watering tips to produce healthy lawns

Summer is a season for landscaping, and homeowners who live in regions that get especially hot in the summertime often worry that their lawns won't make it through the dog days of summer looking lush. But lawns don't have to succumb to the sizzling summer sun. Oftentimes, the right watering strategies can help homeowners nurse their lawns through the hottest months of the year, ensuring the lawns make it to autumn looking as green as they did back at the height of spring.

**Reconsider your sprinkler.** If you can't afford an in-ground irrigation system, which many landscaping professionals feel is the most effective and efficient way to water a lawn, then you likely will rely on a sprinkler to keep your lawn looking lush through the summer months. When choosing a sprinkler, look for one that shoots water out horizontally as opposed to vertically. A vertical sprinkler system

is more vulnerable to wind and evaporation than one that shoots water out horizontally, so make sure your sprinkler system is sending water into your lawn and not into summer breezes.

**Avoid overwatering.** How much water your lawn needs in the summertime depends on a host of factors, including where you live and how often rain falls in that region. Overwatering can promote the growth of fungus and adversely affect your lawn's root system, making it difficult for roots to grow deep. Speak with a local landscaping professional to determine how often you should water your lawn each week.

Keeping a lawn lush and green at the height of summer requires homeowners to adopt effective strategies. Such a strategies can make the difference between a lush landscape and one that succumbs to summer heat.

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