

# Pests in the Lawn

**FREE!**  
Please take one!

A lawn grows naturally in a thick, dense habit. If it is given optimum conditions, it will grow so vigorously that there will be few problems. Following basic guidelines will keep your efforts directed at keeping it vigorous instead of controlling disease, insects and weeds.

Proper nitrogen fertilization is the key to preventing diseases in your lawn. This also affects insect population. Too much nitrogen and the plant will store nitrogen in its tissues. This is perfect for disease start up and nurturing. Too little nitrogen makes the lawn weak and even more susceptible to disease and insects.

The main key to preventing insect problems is to know the life cycle of the insect, so that when you apply your chemicals, you will receive the maximum benefit from them.

When you water, water deeply and infrequently. Watering too often and not for long enough periods causes shallow roots. There will be serious problems if a severe drought comes because shallow rooted plants will die sooner. They will dry out sooner too, making them easier prey for hungry insects. Check a few hours after watering. Soil should be moist to eight inches below the surface.

Mowing your lawn at the proper height (50 per cent taller than its normal height of two inches) will keep it growing vigorously.

Control your thatch layer – 1/4 to 1/2 inch is normal. If it is more, then it must be removed as it hinders disease and insect control. The thatch layer also hinders the flow of nutrients, water and air to the soil. Thatch builds up when your lawn is over-fertilized, over-watered or the soil is too acidic.

Following is a list of common pests and insects:

**Dogs** - Dog urine burns your grass. It should be washed away. Then, re-seed on fresh soil or replace sod.

**Moles** - Moles are four to six inches long with strong forelegs and long claws. They push the soil out of their way as they move. The best way to control moles is to control their food supply of white grubs. They will then move on.

## White Grubs

Grubs are 1/8- to one-inch long, and are milky-white in colour with brown heads. They lie curled up in the soil. They create brown areas in the lawn that roll up, as would a roll of sod. These insects are the larvae of various beetles such as June and Japanese beetles. The entire lawn may die from their feeding on the roots. Some of these beetles lay their eggs in spring or early summer while others lay their eggs in mid to late summer; therefore, they are around for most of the growing season. Grubs will feed in summer, then move deeper to overwinter and resume feeding in spring. The grubs are easier to kill when they are young. Use Diazinon, Solgard, etc. when you first notice damage. For

preventative measures, apply insecticides just after eggs are laid. Water the lawn thoroughly within an hour of spraying and do so in late afternoon or evening. Don't cut your lawn for three days. Treat every two months from late spring onwards.

**Chinch Bugs** - Chinch bugs are black or brown with white wings, approximately 1/4-inch long. The nymphs are pinkish with a white band. The grass will be yellowish and dead. If you suspect chinch bug, cut both ends out of a tin can and push it into the lawn. Fill it with water and the insects should float to the top. Control with Diazinon, Solguard, etc. Affected areas may need to be re-seeded.

**Leaf Hopper** - Leaf hoppers are wedge-shaped insects that you usually see hopping from leaf to leaf. They are 1/4-inch long and are yellow, green or gray. They tend to walk backwards or sideways. The grass may look bleached or thinned, and there will be white or brown spots on single leaf blades indicating the leaf hoppers are feeding on the plant sap. There is usually only one generation per year, therefore the timing for insecticides is very important. Control this insect with Diazinon, Solguard or lawn and soil insecticide.

**Cutworm** - Cutworms are gray, black or brown worms approximately two inches long. Often, they are found in the thatch layer and may be found by pulling back a section of grass. The grass will look chewed unevenly along its edges. One cutworm can sever the stems of many grass plants in one night. These worms feed only at night and for the entire length of the growing season. The adults become dark, night-flying moths with stripes on their forewings. Control with Diazinon, etc.

**Sod Webworm** - Sod webworms are light brown or gray with black spots and are 1/4- to 3/4-inches long. You will see moths flying over the lawn in the evening, and you will also see the silky white tubes near the roots with the worms inside. They create patches the size of a saucer in hot, dry areas of the lawn, which may grow to irregular patches from mid-May to October. Control with Diazinon or Ambush.

**Ants** - Black, brown or red in colour, ants scurry about with great speed. There will be sandy mounds in the centre throughout the lawn. Ants don't actually feed on grass but their mounds can smother grass and their tunnels dry out the roots and soil. Ants will feed on newly sown grass seed. Control with Diazinon, etc.

**Nematodes** - Nematodes are microscopic worms in the soil. They feed on grass roots, making the grass unable to take up enough nutrients and water. They prefer moist sandy loam soil. They move only a few inches each year on their own but are transported for great distances by water, tools, soil and infested plants. Lab tests must be done to confirm their presence but there are some symptoms to indicate their presence. The grass will grow slowly, thin out and turn pale. Main roots will have a few side roots or may grow all from one point. They can be controlled only through soil fumigation before a new lawn is to be installed.

## Sod Webworm (Lawn Moth)





The adults are the familiar small, whitish-gray moth that flies up when you walk across the lawn.



## White Grubs (June Beetle larvae)

Also the grubs (larvae) of the Japanese Beetle and European Chafer. Soft bodied, white insects with brown heads. Usually found curled in a "C" shape. The size varies from 2 to 4 cm, depending on type and age.



The Chinch Bug Life Cycle			
 <p>Chinch Bugs emerge. Females deposit up to 20 eggs daily for 20 to 30 days.</p>	 <p>Eggs hatch in seven to 10 days. Nymphs feed on grass, mature in a month. Two or more generations mature each season.</p>	 <p>Chinch Bugs do worst damage during summer and early fall.</p>	 <p>Adult Chinch Bugs hibernate near grass roots.</p>
SPRING	SUMMER	FALL	WINTER



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