

## Dealing with May-June beetle

June 1, 2016

May-June beetles are part of a complex of over 100 species of beetles that all generally look the same as adults. These beetles are robust, measuring about 1-1.5 inches long, typically are oval in shape and range from red-brown to dark brown in color (Fig. 1). As grubs they appear much the same as a Japanese beetle or chafer grub, creamy white, c-shaped, and sporting a red-orange head capsule. If you need to diagnose which grub you are dealing with you have to check out the tip of its abdomen (the grub butt) to see what its raster pattern looks like. Raster patterns are congregations of hairs at the tip of the grub, the May-June beetle raster pattern looks like a very thin “V” or sort of like an open zipper on a pair of jeans (Fig. 2)

These beetles feature a life cycle unique amongst lawn white grub pests in that they can take up to 3 years to develop in the soil before emerging as adults. The grubs are active as long as the soil is warm, going below the frost line in the winter, and typically emerge as adults sometime in May-June. The damage from the grubs is your typical grub damage, yellowing of the turf, and the patches of brown-dead grass that come up like a carpet due to the removal of roots. Adults can be occasional pests of trees and they feed on the leaves of oak, elm, and walnut. They are also attracted to sources of light and can often buzz into homes.

The average grub control management plan using preventive insecticide products (Acelepryn, neonicotinoids, etc.) will help to minimize May-June beetle grub populations. These applications are normally performed in mid-May up until July. Curative applications of carbaryl can be made in mid-May but you shouldn't expect full control. If you are experiencing heavy infestations of adults, applications of pyrethroids (bifenthrin, cyfluthrin, deltamethrin, etc.) to foliage will knock back populations.



Fig. 1: Adult May-June beetles



Fig. 2: Raster pattern of May-June beetle grub.

Dr. Jonathan L. Larson, Nebraska Extension, [jonathan.larson@unl.edu](mailto:jonathan.larson@unl.edu)