



Recommended Treatments for Lawn Problems

PESTS

Insects and small animals can quickly destroy a beautifully managed lawn. Your best defense against these pesky pests is knowledge. Once you can identify them and identify their path of destruction, you can stop them before any real damage is done.

Below is a list of common pests that are problems for lawns in the central Illinois area, their signs and symptoms, and a solution that will work best in getting rid of them.

PESTS

White Grubs



Photo by: University of Illinois| Extension

Grub Damage



Photo by: University of Illinois| Extension

SIGNS & SYMPTOMS

- Grubs are white soft-bodied, with brown heads
- Grubs have 6 legs and the body is curved into a C-shape
- Full grown white grubs turn into Japanese Beetles
- The turf turns brown and is NOT firmly rooted when grubs are present
- The turf will pull up easily when tugged
- When you pull up the grass, few roots are present and white "C" shaped grubs are in the root zone
- Grubs live in the root zone and feed on the roots

SOLUTION

- PREVENTATIVE ACTION:
Use Grub Control Fertilizer
- Application of insecticides should be applied into the root zone
- Most insecticides will last 3-4 months, but will only take 3 weeks or so to kill the grubs
- Insecticides are most effective if they are watered into the root system with at least 1/2" of water with in that time

Raccoon



Raccoon Damage



- Raccoons are attracted to grubs for food.
- Raccoons will roll back large areas of turf to eat the grubs in the root zone
- Damage consists primarily of pieces of turf several inches across that are removed or pushed up out of place

- Please see the Grub Solution
- If the grubs are gone the raccoons no longer have a food source
- You can also use raccoon traps

Geese



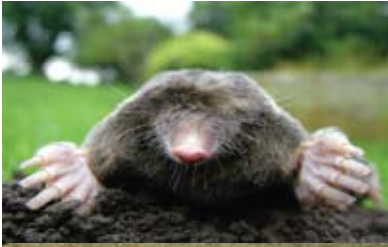
Photo by: University of Illinois| Extension

- Geese eat the grass and leave their feces on the grass
- They can be aggressive
- Geese habitate with any turf that is near a body of water

- A trained dog can chase geese off
- If you don't have a dog, there is a repellent with a grape pulp base that is available, but its appearance and odor can be objectionable
- A fence to separate the water area from the lawn will also discourage geese

PESTS

Moles



Mole Damage



Photo by: University of Illinois | Extension

Sod Webworm



Photo by: University of Illinois | Extension

Webworm Damage



Photo by: University of Illinois | Extension

Birds and Ground Squirrels



Photo by: Illinois State Museum

Dog Urine



SIGNS & SYMPTOMS

- Moles are 6" to 8" long, short legged, blackish (or white) heavily-bodied animals with elongated snouts, short tails & shovel-like front feet
- Moles feed heavily on earthworms and create tunnels
- The tunnels can create mowing problems, can cause turf to die by exposing roots to dry air and are just aesthetically unappealing

- Webworms are slender caterpillars that are grayish to tan with brown spots
- They construct a silk-lined burrow in the thatch, where they hide during the day
- They leave their burrow at night to feed on grass blades
- The turf is brown but is firmly rooted. It does NOT come up easily when tugged
- The grass blades are missing when turf is examined closely
- They blades are chewed off very close to the crown of the plant
- The pupate in their burrow, emerging later as adult moths

- Birds will usually come to a lawn if their is a food source, like grubs, or newly laid grass seed
- Birds LOVE grass seed and will eat it as long as it has not germinated. Once it has germinated, birds will leave it alone
- Ground squirrels and chipmunks feed extensively on grasses, weeds, and seeds
- If your newly seeded lawn is not growing, or is growing unevenly, or in patches, then birds and/or ground squirrels may definitely be the culprit

- A dog's urine is highly acidic and can kill your grass

SOLUTION

- Set mole traps across main tunnels
- Pesticide bait is also available

- Use an insecticide in liquid form and allow to dry on grass blades to poison the webworm larvae when they feed on blades at night

- Treat the grubs with Grub Control Fertilizer
- Rake the grass seed into the topsoil
- Cover the grass seed with a straw blanket
- Use animal decoys that are indigenous to Illinois
- You can cut a slit in an old tennis ball and insert the end of a garden hose. Draw eyes, a mouth and fangs, and create a nose by forming an "X" with strips of yellow tape. Arrange hose in a wavy pattern across seeded area. Birds and other little critters will think it's a snake and stay away.
- Use an automatic sprinkler to scare birds, and ground squirrels/chipmunks away.
- Use traps for ground squirrels/chipmunks if absolutely necessary

- Saturate the urine spot with water
- Train your dog to urinate somewhere else
- Alter the pH of the urine by modifying your dog's diet and adding more yeast (ask your vet)
- Alter the pH of your soil by adding lime (lime acts as a neutralizer). Sprinkle the lime in the affected areas.