

# WHITE GRUB: PREVENTION AND CONTROL

## What is it?

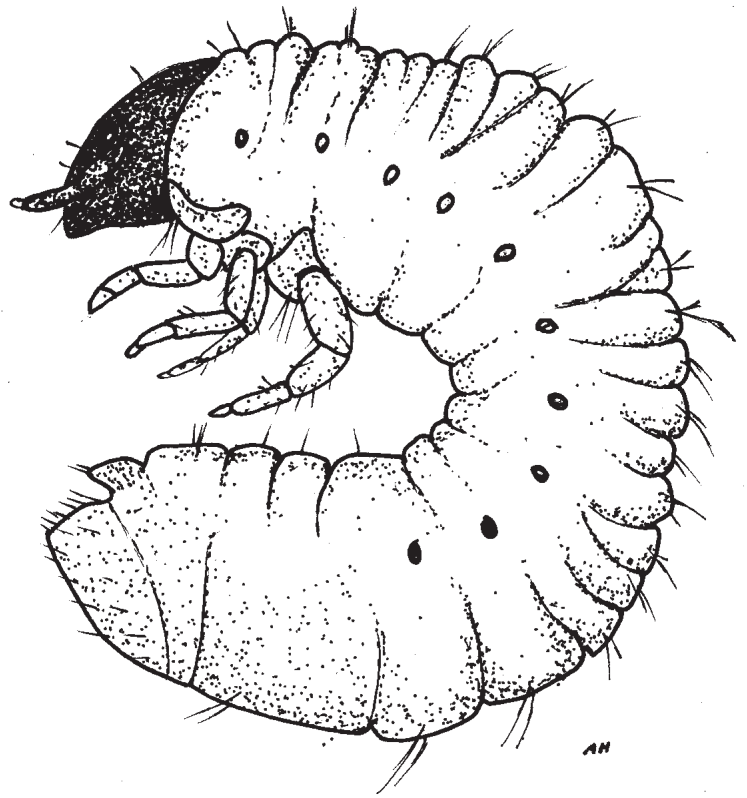
**White grubs**, the larval stage of June beetles, are common lawn pests in Nova Scotia. They can be up to 4 centimetres (1.5 inches) long, with an off-white body and three pairs of legs close to a light-brown head. While at rest, grubs curl up in the soil close to the surface. Adult June beetles have shiny, brown bodies that are about 2.5 cm (1 inch) in length, with long, spiny legs.

## Lifecycle of the June beetle

June beetles have a three-year lifecycle and cause most damage in the second year. In June, the adult lays eggs in the soil and within two weeks the white grubs emerge. The grubs feed on grass roots during the warm summer months, and then move deep into the soil for the winter. The grubs continue feeding the second summer, then transform into the adult beetle during the third year.

## Identifying white grub problems

White grubs live in the soil and feed on the roots of grass, farm and garden crops, and potato tubers. In lawns, white grub feeding shows thin, dry-looking patches of grass.



These areas are often invaded by broadleaf weeds such as plantains and dandelions. The adult June beetle feeds on flowers.

When June beetles are plentiful, white grubs can cause extensive damage during its two year larval stage. In severe infestations, you can pull up the lawn in the affected area like a piece of sod. Foraging animals such as skunks, raccoons, and crows can cause even more damage by digging to find the insects.

# How do you control them?

## Physical methods

A healthy lawn is the best protection against white grubs. Adult June beetles prefer to lay their eggs in thin grass. Keep your lawn properly watered, fertilized, and aerated to encourage good root growth. Healthy grass can withstand some level of feeding damage from white grubs and will discourage adult beetles.

## Biological methods

Try using tiny nematodes, a type of microscopic, roundworm parasite that loves feeding on white grubs. You can buy products containing nematodes at garden centres. Mix the product with water and spray it on the lawn. You should water the treatment area before applying the mix because nematodes move by swimming through water within the soil.

## Chemical methods

If physical and biological control methods aren't doing the job, you might have to use a chemical pesticide. Check the label to find one for domestic use against white grubs that has minimal effect on both you and the environment. Follow all directions carefully. Ask a garden centre expert or hire a certified lawn care professional.

# Nova Scotia's new *Non-essential Pesticides Control Act*

By the spring of 2011, the provincial act restricting the sale and use of non-essential pesticides will be in effect for lawn care products. In 2012, the act extends to products for outdoor trees, shrubs, flowers, and other ornamental plants. A list of allowable pesticides will be available by the spring of 2011 on the province's website.



## Environment

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