

Lawn Grub

The main grub in the area is the Lawn Army worm. They can advance in mass across a field, consuming the grass as they go hence the name army worm. This grub only affects lawns in summer. Lawn grub, (Armyworm), is a moth caterpillar that feeds on the turf foliage at night. The grubs come in large numbers and can cause rapid damage as they move across the turf area.

The Life Cycle :



The moths emerge from the pupae and crawl to the soil surface. They mate from the first night after emergence and egg laying may commence two nights later. Most eggs are deposited between dusk and midnight with individual moths laying up to 4000 eggs with an average of 1700. Egg masses are seldom laid directly on the host plants, and are more commonly found on adjacent vegetation. Citrus, eucalypt, papaya etc leaves are favoured backyard oviposition sites but eggs may be laid on the walls and under the eaves of buildings. Egg masses occur on both upper and lower surfaces of the leaves, usually within a few metres of the ground. Eggs more or less simultaneously. Young armyworms have well developed 'silk glands' and may use silk threads to lower themselves to the ground. They prefer sheltered feeding sites. Feeding commences immediately after hatching and continues at night until larval maturity. Eggs hatch in 2 to 3 days at 27°C and the whole lifecycle from egg to adult can take as little as a month. The larval stage may take as little as 2 to 3 weeks.

Apart from areas of dying lawn, the main indicator of the presence of Army worm is a red wasp with a long sting hovering over the lawn (these are predators of the army worm), birds (ibis or plover pecking into the lawn), or a build-up of yellow cocoons on your house eaves.

To actually identify army worms either put a wet bag on the lawn in the evening then turn it over in the morning -brown, greenish brown or black coloured caterpillar-like grub and sometimes with a striped or triangular markings- this is an army worm; or you can flood a small patch of your lawn and they will come to the surface. They feed on lawns in large groups then when the food supply is exhausted they move off together, a bit like an army on the march.



Particularly affected are Kikuyu and couch lawns and less affected are the buffalo grasses. Be vigilant with newly laid down turf and watch out for the army worm. You should spray the army worm as soon as you are aware of them as they love

the new root shoots of new turf and can do great damage very quickly thus please seek out assistance from your local nursery immediately.

To control army worm at this stage the only effective way is with insecticides. Purchase a lawn grub killer from your garden shop. Follow all instructions and safety directions. It is very important to spray in the evening and quite often helps if insecticide is washed in with a light sprinkler.

The bad news is that it is possible for lawns to be attacked several times in Summer and early Autumn. If this happens retreat with Insecticide. The roots of the lawn should still be intact despite the damage to the leaf area, it is possible to get regrowth by applying a fast acting fertilizer. Also there is some indication that crusher dust used as base for lawn may retard army worm.

As a prevention, we recommend you maintain your lawn with regular mowing during the warmer months. The eggs are laid in masses of 600-700 eggs that are covered with long, light brown hair, these felt-like egg masses are cemented to leaves of trees and shrubs or on buildings close to light and are often found on eaves and open ceilings. Brushing the egg masses helps to physically control the insect,

The lawn armyworm is a serious problem and loves feeding on just about any lawn variety. Severe damage to lawns is characterised by a completely strip a circular area sharply defined by a front of undamaged turf. With heavy populations of actively feeding larvae, this destruction may advance about 30cm each night.