



What to Do About Grubs: Jamie Dekes

Everyone hates the grubs but most don't stop to wonder why the grubs are bothering them and not their neighbor. The grubs that seem to plague us the most on Cape Cod are the Japanese beetle larvae. If you want to make sure you have your grub identified then you can look at its butt. Beetle butts are called rasters and you can tell what type of grub it is by the hair pattern on their raster. If the hair pattern looks like a v then you have yourself a Japanese beetle issue. But no matter what type of grub you have, the means of prevention and treatment are the same.

These insects lay their eggs in June and choose to lay them in wet soils as opposed to dry. Soils that are compacted retain more water, so stay damp. Couple that with irrigation going off way too frequently and you have a lawn that will attract beetles. To reduce likelihood of grub infestations, water for longer periods, but less often. Deeper soakings will also foster deeper root systems, while less frequency allows the surface of the soil to dry without harming the health of the grass.

Getting the life to come back to your soil will also greatly improve the chances of dealing with these pests. The worms will bring the air into the ground, which allows the roots to grow more deeply into the soil. Turf with deep roots suffers less damage because grubs mainly feed in the top 3 inches of the soil. Mowing the grass at 4 inches will also help tremendously as this promotes stronger plants with deeper root systems.

Beyond changing the care of your lawn, Country Garden offers a couple of very solid options for grubs control. Nematodes are a microscopic worm that very much enjoys going after grubs. I'll spare you the details but they deal with grubs very effectively. Milky spore disease is another option for control. This is a natural bacteria, *Bacillus papillae*, that is put down in a grid pattern on the lawn; when a grub eats it, it kills them and ends up spreading more spores. It is slower to use as a control than nematodes but the application method is a little easier.

You have many chemical options as well, but considering that all the herbicides, bug killers and fungicides destroy the beneficials that are integral to our success, they are not an ideal option. If you have other questions about grubs, come into the store.