



# What you need to know about **chafer beetles**

You've seen the damage to grass done by the crows who love to dine on the grubs. Here is some information for beating the beetle and having a healthy lawn this spring and summer.

## **What is a European Chafer Beetle?**

The European Chafer beetle is an introduced insect to BC that has become a serious lawn pest. It was first discovered in the lower mainland in 2001. Adult European Chafer beetles are tan or brown and measure 1.5 cm in length. The larvae (grubs) measure approximately 2 to 2.5 cm in length, are white and C-shaped with tan colored heads and six prominent legs.



adult chafer



chafer larvae (grubs)

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## Why is it a problem?

Chafer beetle infestations can be very damaging to lawns. The grubs damage the lawns by feeding on grass roots. If food is scarce they will move to vegetable plantings to feed on corn, potatoes, blueberries, strawberries, conifers and other crops. Grub feeding on grass roots weakens and kills grass plants, resulting in large brown and dead patches and major damage can occur when crows, skunks, raccoons and other animals dig up the lawn in search for grubs that are present from September to April.

## How can I tell if my lawn is infested?

Chafer beetle infestation is often most visible in the fall through early spring (October-March) when raccoons, birds and other wildlife begin to dig up the turf to eat the grubs. Other times of the year, you may notice your lawn:

- feels “spongy” when you walk on it due to the grubs feeding below (July-September)
- is wilted or dead and brown and easy to pull up
- has abundant moisture in spring and fall and drier weather quickly results in the appearance of brown patches

## How do I combat the beetle?

**Maintain a healthy lawn.** Adopt a vigorous maintenance routine involving aerating, dethatching, fertilizing, deep watering and high mowing.

**Alternative landscapes.** Install landscapes devoid of grass such as Dutch White Clover, Salal, Ajuga, Vancouver Gold Bloom, Thyme and Sedum.

**Beneficial Nematodes.** Use Nematodes; living microscopic worms that attack the chafer grubs. Nematodes must be ordered, stored and applied all within a very short time period in July for best results.

**Insecticides.** There are a few insecticides registered in Canada for management of European chafer. Application has to be done in spring or early summer.

**For more information and resources visit:  
[abbotsford.ca/chafer](http://abbotsford.ca/chafer)**