



ABOUT JAPANESE BEETLES

(Updated March, 2019)

The Japanese beetle is a serious pest in urban landscapes and lawns. In the US, they were first found in New Jersey in 1916. Since they don't have any natural enemies here, it was inevitable they would make their way to Kansas City, and now they are here in significant numbers. While their population may change year to year, they will not be going away. Unlike most insects, both the larval and adult stages cause significant damage, which means a thorough understanding of their life cycle and control methods are important to manage them.



SEASONAL LIFE CYCLE OF THE JAPANESE BEETLE

– (J. KALISCH, UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA)

ADULT JAPANESE BEETLE



As you can see by the above picture, adult Japanese beetles emerge from the soil around mid-June and immediately begin feeding. They have over 300 tree and landscape host plants which means damage can be extensive and widespread. The adults live about 30-45 days and all they do during that time is feed and mate, with the females laying eggs continuously in lawns.

Adults feed on green leaf tissue but not leaf veins which causes a characteristic netted appearance on leaves.



As mentioned before, they have a huge number of host plants. You may see just a few beetles on a plant that they are “sampling” but not heavily feeding on, so don't worry about treating that plant. The real damage is on a true host plant with group (aggregate) feeding that can lead to defoliation within days. This aggregate feeding happens two ways. First, as beetles feed on green leaf tissue, plants release a floral scent that attracts more beetles. And, more feeding leads to more scent released which attracts even more beetles. Secondly, females release a pheromone that attracts males to their location but only until after their first mating.

BEETLES ARE ATTRACTED TO AND CAN FLY 1-2 MILES TO A FOOD SOURCE.

ADULT BEETLE CONTROL

Starting mid-June, walk around your yard several times a week and look closely at each plant for signs of feeding. If you have the time and not too many plants, you can hand pick and drown them in a bucket of soapy water. Pick in the morning when they are a bit sluggish or even better around 7 PM or so when they spend evenings underneath the leaves and you find more to pick off. Keep in mind that this control method is a daily activity.

Ferti-lome Tree & Shrub Systemic can be used as a shrub and tree drench preventative applied early to mid- May but follow up foliar treatments may be needed. This product cannot be used on Linden trees by federal law.



Soil Service Garden Center, Inc.

“Kansas City’s One-Stop Garden Shop” Since 1934

Phone: 816/ 444-3403

www.SoilService.com

Fax: 816/ 444-4449

ABOUT JAPANESE BEETLES

Page 2

FOLIAR CONTROL OPTIONS

If you treat with a control product, treating right after you see them slows down aggregate feeding but waiting too long is too late. Offense is better than defense!

- ♦ **Pyrethroids**- This insect control class is derived from the chrysanthemum plant and is effective for 10 days to 2 weeks. *Ferti-lome Broad Spectrum Insect Control* is a great choice.
- ♦ *Sevin* has a broad spectrum label for veggies and lasts about 7-10 days.
- ♦ *Natural Guard Spinosad + Insecticidal Soap*- Controls beetles that are sprayed.
- ♦ *Beetle Traps*- Have a floral scent and pheromone that attracts large numbers of beetles from great distances. Traps should be placed at least 300 ft. from desirable plants and you should be prepared to empty them daily. Susceptible plants along their flight path to get to the trap can cause even more feeding, so traps are usually not recommended.

JAPANESE BEETLE GRUBS IN LAWNS

As mentioned before, they prefer laying eggs in lawns vs. gardens. Recent research shows that rainfall of approximately 8 inches or more in the summer (June, July, August) increases grub survival which leads to more adult beetle feeding the following year. At the same time, we've long known that irrigated lawns also have more damage.

Historically in Kansas City, bluegrass lawns are magnets for Masked Chafer grub damage. But that's changed because Japanese beetle grubs will also damage or kill fescue and bluegrass lawns when the population is high. Fortunately Japanese beetle grub control uses the same product and application timing as a Masked Chafer with a **PREVENTATIVE TREATMENT of *Hi-Yield Grub Free Zone*** and should be applied the 3rd week in June (think Father's Day weekend).

Your other option is to wait it out to see if you have damage. Be aware that when damage occurs in August/September, it can be difficult to tell the difference between beetle, drought or disease damage. A rescue treatment of **Dylox** is your only option.

About Milky Spore- Milky Spore is very selective for Japanese beetle grubs but also very difficult to establish with any sustainable population in our hot KC summer climate. We do not recommend this product for our area.



Soil Service Garden Center, Inc.

"Kansas City's One-Stop Garden Shop" Since 1934

Phone: 816/ 444-3403

www.SoilService.com

Fax: 816/ 444-4449