



HUNTING BILLBUG IN ZOYSIA LAWNS

(February 2020)

The hunting billbug is a weevil that can devastate zoysia lawns. Not only is it difficult to both find and control, but by the time a homeowner notices the damage, about mid- July in Kansas City, it's too late; that part of the lawn is dead. And replacing a zoysia lawn is difficult and expensive.

Billbugs kill zoysia growing in the sunniest lawn areas. They typically will not damage lawns where there is shade for only a few hours or more from trees or houses.

HUNTING BILLBUG LIFE CYCLE

Billbugs overwinter as either an adult or larvae which means in Kansas City they can have 1- 1 ½ generations per year. This generation overlap contributes to problems controlling them because different life cycle stages may need different control and/or control timing strategies.



Recent University of Missouri studies show billbug adults are most active from about midnight to very early morning when they feed on leaves and stems. Females climb up the leaves and bite off a small piece of the stem where they lay eggs. When the eggs hatch, the larvae feed inside the stems and, as they mature, tunnel to the plant base. It's this tunneling that kills the grass. They then emerge from the base and go into the soil where they pupate and repeat the cycle. If your zoysia lawn suddenly dies around mid-July, pull up the dead grass and pull the stems apart. Hollow stems are diagnostic for billbug damage.



These MU studies suggest the best way to control billbugs is when the adults are laying eggs from late April to early May. **Mid-late April apply *Ferti-lome Liquid Broad Spectrum Insect Control*, available at your Soil Service Garden Center. Granular formulations of this product have not been university evaluated for control.**



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