

**INSIDE GRUNDY COUNTY**  
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**Japanese Beetles Are Back**

The Japanese beetle is a well-known pest of turfgrass and landscapes in the eastern United States. Japanese beetles have been identified in over forty counties in Iowa (including Butler and Grundy), predominantly in the east-central part of the state. Adult beetles eat the foliage, fruits and flowers of over three hundred plants. Foliage is consumed by eating the tissue between the veins, a type of feeding called skeletonizing. Flowers and fruits are devoured completely, often by a horde of a dozen or more beetles at a time. Rose, grape, cherry, apple, raspberry and linden tree leaves are some of their favorite plants to eat.

Japanese beetle larvae are typical white grubs. They are in the soil from August until June where they feed on plant roots (especially turfgrass) and organic matter. The grubs are C-shaped and approximately one and a quarter inches long when full grown. Treating your lawn, to control the grubs, in order to reduce the number of adult Japanese beetles, will not be effective. The small area you can treat will not have any impact on the following year's adult population. They are good fliers and can come in from other areas. That does not mean you should not treat turfgrass if you want to protect it from the root feeding larvae. To be effective, preventive treatments must be applied before mid August and according to label directions.

Adult beetles emerge in mid-June through July. They are similar to other Junebugs in general appearance. They are three eighths inch long and one quarter inch wide. The head and thorax are a shiny metallic green and the wing covers are coppery red. The row of five tufts of white hairs on each side of the abdomen is a distinguishing characteristic.

Control of adult beetles is difficult because they emerge every day for a period of several weeks. Handpicking or screening of high-value plants may be of benefit in isolated situations with limited numbers of beetles. Spot spraying infested foliage of high value plants with carbaryl (Sevin), permethrin (Eight) or cyfluthrin (Tempo) may reduce damage for several days, but multiple applications are required to maintain control. Spraying the adult stage is not an effective strategy for prevention of white grubs.

Several traps using a floral lure and/or sex attractant are available. Use of these traps is not recommended. Research conducted in Kentucky suggests that they are not effective in controlling moderate to heavy infestations and may attract more beetles into a yard than would occur otherwise. While the traps may catch hundreds or thousands of beetles over the summer, this is a small percentage of beetles in the area and will have no lasting impact on beetle population or plant damage. Traps used in lightly infested areas may reduce damage and beetle populations when landscapes are isolated from other Japanese beetle breeding areas or when mass trapping (everyone in the neighborhood) is used.

For more information about the Japanese beetle, contact the Grundy office of ISU Extension at 319-824-6979.