



JAPANESE BEETLES

Japanese Beetles make their appearance in the Chicagoland area beginning in late June through July. The beetles can be up to 1/2 inch long, and have oval, metallic green bodies with coppery brown wing covers. The beetles will feed on the leaves of hundreds of ornamental plants but, their favorites include roses, crabapples, cherries, grapes and lindens. Since they eat the leaf tissue between the veins, the resulting damage will be seen as skeletonized leaves and in severe infestations, complete defoliation of the plant.

Life Cycle

Japanese beetles overwinter as larvae (grubs) in lawns beneath the soil. As the weather warms, the grubs move toward the surface and emerge in their adult form (beetle) from late June through July. The females lay their eggs in late July through August. If the soil is warm and moist, the eggs will hatch in about 10 days and the young grubs will feed on plant roots until the cooler weather sends them further below the soil surface.

Management Strategies

Control of Japanese Beetles can be done during different stages of the life cycle. Sprays like Bonide Japanese Beetle Killer will work on the adult beetle form. Another option is to handpick the adult beetles in the morning when they are sluggish. Place a bucket of soapy water underneath the leaf they are chewing and shake the branch so they fall in the water. Pheromone traps are not recommended as they may attract more beetles to your yard.

Treating the beetle in its larvae (grub) stage can be done very easily. The eggs and young grubs need moisture to survive. Therefore, by simply limiting lawn irrigation when beetle activity is at its peak (mid-July through early August), the young will not survive.

Biological milky spore is not very effective in our climate and is not really recommended.

Beneficial nematodes can be watered into your lawn in late July as they will kill young grubs. These are available through internet sources.



Adult beetle



Leaf damage