

# Pest Control



**There are many insect pests that like to attack your lawn and can potentially cause significant harm. Being aware of what's out there in the insect world will keep you one step ahead of the game and better equipped to deal with any uninvited guests**

## What Are Root Feeding Grubs?

Root feeding grubs are sometimes known as white curl grub, scarab beetle larvae, lawn beetle larvae or cockchafer. These are the common names for the juvenile stage of lawn beetle that feed on the lawn roots. White curl grub, however, is sometimes incorrectly referred to as 'witchetty grub'.

Adult lawn grubs feed on the roots of your lawn and can be a serious problem. Cool season varieties like fescue and warm season varieties like kikuyu and couch can experience major damage from a nasty infestation, but they are not usually an issue for buffalo varieties. Stressed, under-nourished lawns are also particularly prone to damage.

Adult beetles are black and shiny, about 15mm long with brown serrated legs. The eggs are laid in spring and early summer, developing into larvae that then feed on the roots. The pupal stage causes no damage, but the emerging grubs in late spring/early summer do. The beetles are dormant or semi dormant in winter.



A small infestation of black beetle can provide benefits to some lawns, for instance buffalos help the soil with their tunnelling activity and stimulating new root growth, but if you see damage, it's best to send them packing.

## What Are Surface Dwelling Grubs?

'Lawn grub' is also a common term for surface dwelling caterpillars such as sod webworm, armyworm and cutworm that feed on the lawn leaves then become moths after their pupae stage.

The surface dwelling type of these lawn grubs all cause similar issues on your otherwise healthy lawn. The moths that lay the eggs, which then become lawn grubs, are fussy as they lay eggs on or around the best lawn in the street. Then the caterpillars eat the best and leave the rest.

If you see brown or straw like patches in your lawn, or the leaves on your lawn's grass runners are disappearing, you may have an infestation of lawn grubs. Small green droppings will also be present, which are basically your old lawn.

Often you don't see the caterpillars as they feed at night, however you may notice white/grey moths flying over your lawn or nearby garden which is often an indication of a potential lawn grub problem. Lawn grubs are a seasonal issue and, unfortunately, they can effect your lawn several times during each summer and autumn season. If you have treated a minor infestation and your lawn is still in good condition, the moths are likely to come back, requiring a repeat treatment. You can follow up the control treatment with fertilising to fast track recovery, but be sure to fertilise in autumn to set your lawn up for winter and spring.

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## ARMYWORM

*Spodoptera mauritia*

BAD NEWS! Army worms are the caterpillar stage of a white/ grey/brown moth, adult moth.

## CUTWORM

*Agrotis munda*

Similar to armyworms, cutworms feed and cut off the grass near the soil, hence the name, causing serious damage.

## SOD WEBWORM

*Herpetogramma licapsalis*

This greenish grey larvae/caterpillars have black spots along the body and are about 3cm long. The damage they cause is similar to armyworm and cutworm and they are often found operating at the same time.

## How Do I Get Rid Of Lawn Grubs?

To get rid of lawn grubs and other lawn pests – an application of a suitable insecticide is required.

For surface dwelling types, an application late afternoon or early evenings gives best results when combined with a light watering in. In the case of the root eating types, as they dwell in the soil, the insecticide needs to be watered through the lawn and thatch layer to make contact with them. This will require a higher concentration of insecticide and a heavier application of water to get it to the target area.

