

# Japanese Beetle

## 2006 Control Recommendations



(Note: This factsheet discusses only the adult beetle. For information on how to control the grub stage in lawns, see our Grub Control factsheet.)

### **Description**

The adult beetles are distinctive and easy to identify. They are oval shaped 3/8” long and 1/4” wide with a bright, metallic green head and thorax and copper-colored wing covers. The adult beetles appear in early July and usually stay through August.

The larvae are fat white grubs, curled into a “C” shape found in soil, especially in lawns. Other beetles have similar looking larvae, bring in a sample to be sure which one you have. They feed on the roots of grass plants and are discussed in our Grub Control factsheet.

### **Damage**

Japanese beetle adults feed on a wide variety of flowers, trees and shrubs their favorites being roses, grapes, raspberries and linden trees. Rather than devouring the entire leaf, they more typically skeletonize the leaf, giving it a lacey appearance.

### **Life Cycle**

Japanese beetles overwinter as grubs in the soil under lawns. The larvae pupate in late May – early June and emerge as adult beetles in late June into July. Adults feed and lay eggs into mid August and may continue feeding until the first frost when they die. There is one generation per year.

### **Control**

Japanese beetles are difficult to control with sprays. No insecticide can be used on a plant in flower, especially when your target pest is actually inside the flower as this one often is.

Whenever possible start with handpicking as many of these bugs as you can. It sounds impossible but once you get the knack you can be quite effective. Hold a jar of soapy water (no gasoline or kerosene, please!) underneath the branch that has beetles. They tend to drop from the branches when disturbed so your goal is to catch them in the soapy water as they drop. Wait a few hours before dumping out the soapy water to make sure they have completely drowned.

Insecticides to control Japanese beetles include Bayer Advanced Garden Rose and Flower Insect Killer (containing cyfluthrin and imidacloprid) and Sevin (containing carbaryl) and malathion. Check the label to make sure your plant and this pest is listed.

Japanese beetle traps are so attractive they draw many more beetles to your yard that you would have otherwise so they are not helpful.

Milky spore is a disease widely marketed for controlling the grubs of Japanese beetles. If your problem is with the adult beetle, milky spore is not effective. See our Grub Control factsheet if the grubs are causing problems.

**Lake Friendly Gardening Tip – Think Before You Spray!**

Japanese beetles can be very destructive. If particular plants in your yard are devoured every year, consider replacing them with something less attractive to them. Example: replace purple-leaf sandcherry with Diablo ninebark, replace roses with potentilla or perennials, replace grapes with blueberries.

If handpicking is impossible and you decide to spray, keep the spray away from open flower buds. If you decide to use Sevin, look for the liquid formulation instead of the dust which is much harder to control and remember that Sevin is very toxic to honeybees.

PESTICIDE DISCLAIMER: Every effort has been made to provide correct, complete and up-to-date pesticide recommendations. Nevertheless, changes in pesticide regulations occur constantly, human errors are still possible. These recommendations are not a substitute for pesticide labeling. Please read the label before applying any pesticide and follow the directions exactly.

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