Six of the country’s top men give their views on pests (Leatherjackets, chafers, worms, rabbits and moles) and how they combat them

**Pests** (Leatherjackets, chafers, worms, rabbits and moles)

Compiled by Malcolm Huntington MBE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Course Type</th>
<th>Staff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Iain MacLeod</td>
<td>Tain GC, Rossshire</td>
<td>Scotland</td>
<td>Links</td>
<td>Head Greenkeeper plus four</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pat Murphy</td>
<td>Shipley GC</td>
<td>Northern</td>
<td>Parkland/heathland</td>
<td>Course Manager, plus six, plus two gardeners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neil Whitaker</td>
<td>Arkley GC, Herts</td>
<td>Midland</td>
<td>Mixture of parkland and heathland</td>
<td>Course Manager, plus two (nine holes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Billy Mitchell</td>
<td>Perranporth Golf Club, Newquay, Cornwall</td>
<td>South West and South Wales</td>
<td>Head greenkeeper plus three (365 acres)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Billy McMillan</td>
<td>Mannings Heath, Horsham, Sussex</td>
<td>Northern Ireland</td>
<td>Parkland (36 holes)</td>
<td>Course Manager, plus two Head Greenkeepers, eight greenkeepers plus mechanic (winter), plus three more staff (summer)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joe Findlay</td>
<td>Royal Portrush Golf Club, Co Antrim</td>
<td>Northern Ireland</td>
<td>Links</td>
<td>Head Greenkeeper plus 13, plus five part-time timers in summer (36 holes, nine-hole pitch and putt course)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Which pests give you the most problem?

**Leatherjackets and moles.** It used to be rabbits, but we employ someone to shoot them now and whereas we used to get as many as 30-40 in one night now we only see the odd one.

**Moles** are the main problem, but I also get damage from rabbits, badgers and deer.

Rabbits, closely followed by moles. We also have worms and a few leatherjackets in addition to quite a few foxes.

Rabbits and moles are the biggest problems and we get more moles if we have worms about.

Worms are by far the most debilitating problem on our courses and I see them as a major concern for many people in years to come if, as seems possible, winters get wetter. We don’t get a lot of leatherjackets here.

Leatherjackets are the only real problem. There are no sign of worms because of our sandy soil.
How do you identify them early? How do they affect play? What measures can you take to prevent them? What measures do you take to tackle them if they have hit?

We see the crane fly on the wing and also laying on fairways and greens and the presence of various birds, including the hooded crow soon let us know they are about.

Not really at all. We try to nip things in the bud when possible. We didn't aerate in August, September and October this year so that there wouldn't be ready-made holes for crane flies to lay eggs. Instead we tine and verticut in November.

We spray for leather jackets in November and, if there is a major infestation, in March as well. Because we are on sandy soil we get few problems with worms but greens are sprayed to deal with what few we have.

We trap moles, net rabbits but don't touch badgers, which are protected, or deer. I am a nature lover so I don't like to see shooting on the course. I am a bit worried that we may struggle to find something to deal with worms one of these days. There hasn't been anything as good as chlordane, which is now banned of course.

Rabbits are easily identified because of scratches and droppings. Birds pecking are a sign of leather jackets and sometimes worms when the birds turn divots over.

Rabbits are no problem to identify as there are scratches and holes dug round bunkers. Molehills clearly indicate their presence.

Worm casting in early autumn and winter.

If you wait to see signs of damage it is too late. Crane flies lay eggs in August and September. In late October or early November I spray with Chlorpyrifos insecticide to kill the grubs and also do a lot of aerating and also use a hydrojet.

The casting of worms can destroy any fine sward and detracts from the quality of the playing surface for members and visitors as you can quickly get a lot of mud. Some players tee up on worm casts!

I spray with the appropriate pesticide if there is a sign of bird activity. Rabbits are a minor problem. We had a foot square of fairway damaged by a rabbit, but his time will come! And you may be interested to know there are no moles in Ireland.

Spraying with pesticides, repellants and retardants. We have someone coming in once a fortnight to shoot rabbits.

Molehills give you a clear indication straight away, and there are scrapes and droppings from rabbits, badgers dig up the grass and deer eat parts of trees.

They don't affect play at all because damage is not done to the fine turf. Moles are usually in semi-rough and rough on our course.

Bunkers have to be raked regularly because of rabbits digging. We had nests built into the bunkers last year. But generally speaking they don't affect play that much.

I use Scotts, a good animal repellent and I also have mole traps in addition to putting down Phostoxin. We have a resident badger which does a bit of digging but we tolerate him.

Rabbits are major problem and it is a losing battle with them. We use conventional methods such as shooting and gassing.

The most important thing is to have a good deep-rooted system and tight sward to withstand pests. We haven't used fungicides for the last three years, only pesticides.

The most important thing is to have a good deep-rooted system and tight sward to withstand pests. We haven't used fungicides for the last three years, only pesticides.

We restrict worm casts by chemical control as late in the season as possible in an effort to avoid multiple applications of chemicals on our courses. But always remember the old saying 'as custodians of the land we have to co-exist with nature.'

Moles need water every four hours, so I suppose you could say cut off the supply! In dry weather they go down and you never see them and they come up looking for worms when it's wet.

We trap moles, net rabbits but don't touch badgers, which are protected, or deer. I am a nature lover so I don't like to see shooting on the course. I am a bit worried that we may struggle to find something to deal with worms one of these days. There hasn't been anything as good as chlordane, which is now banned of course.

Rabbits are easily identified because of scratches and droppings. Birds pecking are a sign of leather jackets and sometimes worms when the birds turn divots over.

Holes in bunkers are the usual problem concerning rabbits and divots lifted by birds, in addition to not being replaced by golfers, are a nuisance. But I would say that play isn't affected to any great extent.

Spraying with pesticides, repellants and retardants. We have someone coming in once a fortnight to shoot rabbits.

If you wait to see signs of damage it is too late. Crane flies lay eggs in August and September. In late October or early November I spray with Chlorpyrifos insecticide to kill the grubs and also do a lot of aerating and also use a hydrojet.

I use Scotts, a good animal repellent and I also have mole traps in addition to putting down Phostoxin. We have a resident badger which does a bit of digging but we tolerate him.

We try to eradicate pests by conventional methods, shooting rabbits and gassing the burrows. But we will never beat them.

We try to eradicate pests by conventional methods, shooting rabbits and gassing the burrows. But we will never beat them.