

Questions and Answers

Dear Mike:

I have large areas that used to be grass, but are now dried up and can be lifted by hand. They are mostly in areas that have no irrigation. I realize it's late for this year, but whatever you can find out may help for next year.

Rodney Fairfax
Collingwood, Ontario

Dear Rodney:

It sounds like you may have been invaded by a white grub, probably the European chafer, which has been almost epidemic in the irrigated low-rainfall areas of Ontario.

It will cut or chew off the roots of the grass plant to about an inch below the soil surface, which allows the sod to be lifted easily. Below the surface, you will find small, C-shaped grey-white grubs. The adult is a hard-shelled beetle.

Unfortunately, these grubs attack most grasses. Control depends on the severity of the problem. Skunks, birds and other small animals will root out and eat these grubs, but leave the area looking somewhat unsightly.

You can spray affected areas with a recommended chemical such as Diazinon, but it must be used before a rain or watered in with irrigation, otherwise you are wasting your labour and money.

One of our experts, Annette Anderson, says a late fall fertilization can also be useful to help the grass plants build up before freeze up, which in turn promotes a faster green up in the spring. Use a high-nitrogen fertilizer such as 31-0-0 and apply while the plant can still take up nutrients. Some overseeding may be required in the spring.

Ontario Turfgrass Symposium

The First Annual Ontario Turfgrass Symposium has been a long time coming, but like the Sports Turf Association, it's "an idea whose time had come." Bob Sheard has been involved in meetings on the symposium, and Annette Anderson has been pulling it all together, including arranging many of the speakers. There are already more than 200 delegates registered, and the trade show is filling up quickly. Sixty of the 80 booths are filled, with almost a month to go.

The symposium promises to be great, so don't miss out because you couldn't get a cheque in time from your employer. Write a cheque yourself and get reimbursed later. You'll be glad you went.

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