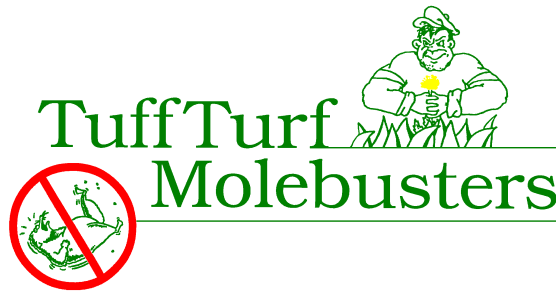




Jim Zylstra



TURF tips



A lawn can have brown spots for a wide variety of reasons: heat, drought stress, diseases, and insects. Heat and drought stress are by far the most common ones we see. Daily watering can help prevent drought stress and some insect damage. Over watering can result in fungus and diseases. Most people are aware of grubs, but there are three other insects that are not as well known:

Chinch Bug

When: Damage appears when daytime temperatures reach 70 degrees F.



Damage: The chinch bug is only 1/8 of an inch long. They pierce the plant with its four-jointed beak and suck out the plant sap. Irregular patches of turf begin to turn yellow then straw colored. **Dead patches appear in sunny areas and many times along a driveway, curb, and sidewalk. Damage resembles drought stress.**



Control: Slightly damaged turf will recover rather quickly if lightly fertilized and watered daily. Insecticides can also be applied to areas with heavier damage.

Sod Web Worm

When: Damage appears in late June into early August.



Damage: The larvae emerge from burrows in the ground to chew grass blades off just above the thatch line, usually at night. This causes general turf thinning or even irregular dead patches in sunny, hot, and dry areas. The thin turf allows weeds to establish in the lawn making it unsightly. In thick, green turf, injury appears as small brown patches about the size of a quarter to three inches in diameter. The adult is the white moth that flutters above the ground.



Control: Damage can sometimes be outgrown if watered daily. Insecticides may need to be applied.

Bluegrass Billbug

When: Damage appears in late-June through August.



Damage: Bluegrass billbugs pierce the grass with their mouths and feed on the inside of Kentucky bluegrass. Light infestations in lawns often produce small dead spots that look diseased. Billbug damaged turf turns a whitish-straw color rather than the yellow. If the stalks break easily at ground level and the stems are hollowed out or are full of packed sawdust-like material, billbugs are the culprit.



Control: With light to moderate billbug infestations, much of the damage can be masked with fertilization and daily irrigation. Insecticides may need to be applied.