



Customer Guide:

# Why Is My Lawn Torn Up?

Understanding the Chafer Beetle Infestation  
— and What You Can Do About It



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## Understanding the Chafer Beetle Infestation — and What You Can Do About It

If your lawn has been torn up by raccoons, skunks, or crows, you're not alone. Across Abbotsford and the Eastern Fraser Valley, **European chafer beetle grubs** have become one of the most common causes of severe lawn damage. After consultation with the Ministry of Agriculture and professionals in the industry, Sutherland Landscaping has developed the following guide to help educate our clients and community on proven solutions that will solve your lawn issues.

This guide is designed to help you:

- Understand what's actually happening below the surface
- Decide whether a DIY approach makes sense for you
- Know when professional help is the smarter investment
- Choose a long-term solution that fits your property and goals

## What's Actually Causing the Damage?

### Introduction to the Chafer Beetle

The European chafer beetle is an invasive lawn pest that was unintentionally introduced to North America through soil and plant movement. It was first identified in eastern Canada and has gradually spread west, becoming established in Metro Vancouver and the Fraser Valley over the last decade.

Chafer beetles lay their eggs in lawns during the summer months. These eggs hatch into **white, C-shaped grubs** that live underground and feed on grass roots. As the roots are eaten, turf becomes weak, loose, or dies entirely.

Wildlife such as raccoons, skunks, and crows can smell these grubs and will repeatedly dig up lawns to get to them. In many cases, **the animals are the visible problem — but the grubs are the underlying cause.**

## Common signs of chafer grub damage

- Rolled, flipped, or peeled-back sod
- Turf that feels soft or lifts easily
- Thinning or browning grass despite watering
- Increased bird activity or overnight digging

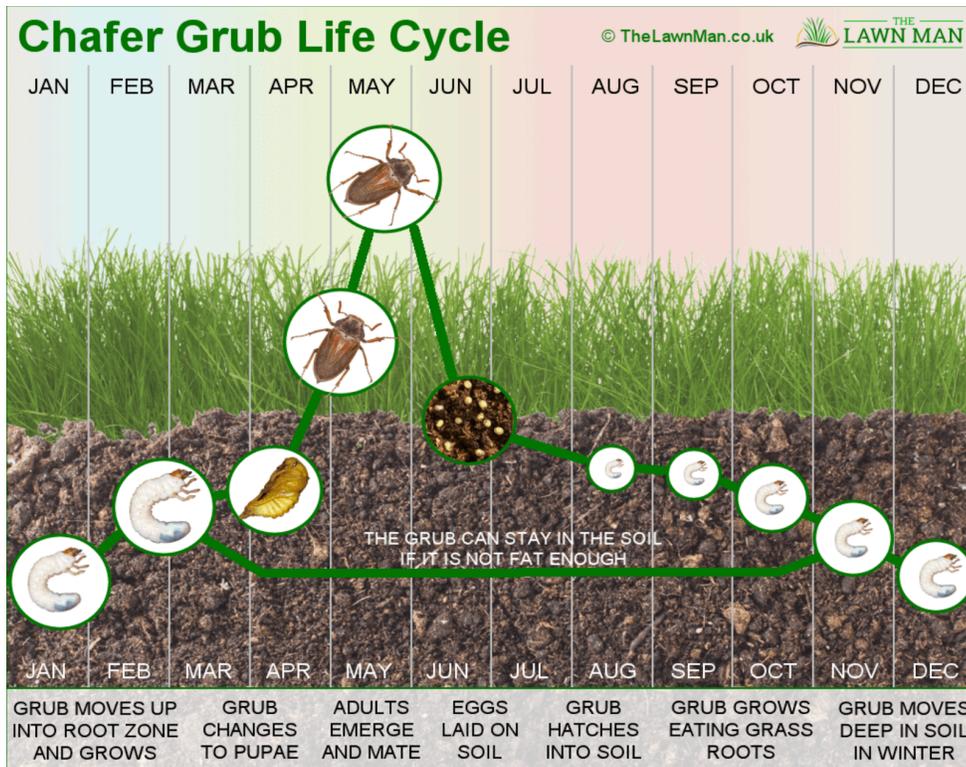


## How to confirm before spending money

Before treating or repairing your lawn, it's important to confirm the cause:

- Lift a small section of sod (about 30 × 30 cm / 1 sq. ft.)
- Count the number of grubs in the soil
- **Rough guideline:** 10 or more grubs per square foot can lead to turf failure and attract wildlife

If you're unsure what you're seeing, a professional assessment can help prevent wasted time and money.



## Why Timing Matters:

### The Chafer Beetle Life Cycle

This infographic shows the **predictable seasonal life cycle** of the chafer beetle. Understanding this cycle explains **why some treatments work — and why others fail if applied at the wrong time.**

## Key takeaways for homeowners:

- **Summer (July–August):** Adult beetles lay eggs; young grubs hatch close to the soil surface
- **Late summer / early fall:** Grubs feed aggressively on grass roots
- **Fall–winter:** Grubs move deeper into the soil and are harder to control
- **Spring:** Damage becomes visible, but grubs are often already large
  - **Wildlife damage peaks** when grubs are present and easy to access (spring and fall)

### This is why:

- Many DIY treatments only work during narrow windows
- Preventative treatments applied earlier in the season are often more effective
- Repairing visible damage alone does not solve the underlying problem

**Important:** Most lawn damage is noticed after the ideal treatment window has passed. Proper timing — not just product choice — is the most critical factor in successful grub control.

## Solutions You Can Do on Your Own (DIY Options)

DIY solutions can work — if timing, conditions, and expectations are realistic.

### Option 1: Beneficial Nematodes

- **What they are:** Microscopic organisms that actively seek out and kill chafer larvae in the soil.
- **Best timing:** Late July through August, when grubs are small and closer to the surface.
- **What's required for success:**
  - Soil must stay consistently moist before and after application
  - Apply in the evening or on cloudy days
  - Follow package directions carefully
- **Good fit if:** You can commit to consistent watering for 2–3 weeks and you want a biological, lower-impact option
- **Limitations include:** Effectiveness has been known to be limited and drops significantly in hot or dry conditions. Watering restrictions can also severely limit success, and results vary if timing isn't right

## Option 2: BTG / “Grub B Gon”

(*Bacillus thuringiensis galleriae*)

- **What it is:** A microbial product that kills grubs after ingestion. Widely available at garden centres.
- **Why homeowners choose it:**
  - Publicly available and easy to apply
  - Generally lower risk to people, pets, and wildlife
  - Does not require the same level of watering as nematodes
- **Limitations:**
  - Works best as part of an overall plan
  - Not typically a one-time solution for heavy infestations

## Option 3: DIY Lawn Replacement (A Turf-Free Renovation)

For some homeowners — especially those dealing with repeated wildlife damage year after year — removing the lawn entirely can be the most effective and stress-reducing solution. By eliminating turf, you remove the food source that attracts wildlife and significantly reduce the likelihood of future damage.

**Common DIY lawn replacement options include:**

- **Rock gardens** using decorative rock, shrubs, and perennials
- **Raised planters** for vegetables or flowers
- **Grass alternatives** such as clover or mixed ground covers
- **Artificial turf**, installed with proper base preparation and drainage

## DIY Closing Thoughts: Choosing a Long-Term Solution

Chafer beetle damage is rarely a one-time issue, and approaches that focus only on repairing visible damage often lead to the same problems returning year after year. Whether you choose treatment, prevention, or lawn replacement, success comes from addressing the underlying cause rather than reacting to the symptoms. Supportive lawn care practices such as proper mowing height, overseeding, aeration, and soil health improvements can further strengthen your landscape and reduce future pressure. **A thoughtful, long-term approach will always outperform a short-term fix.**

# Solutions a Contractor Can Help You With

Involving a professional contractor can save significant time, reduce guesswork, **and lead to more durable, long-term solutions** — especially when damage is severe or recurring. They can confirm the cause of the issue, apply treatments at the correct time, and coordinate lawn repair or replacement to prevent the same problem from returning year after year.

When choosing a contractor, **work with a reputable, qualified professional** who holds the proper certifications (such as a valid pesticide applicator's license where applicable), carries appropriate liability insurance, and has a proven track record with similar work. It's also wise to obtain **two to three quotes** so you can compare approaches, timelines, and long-term recommendations — not just price.

## Option 1: Professional Grub Control (Acelepryn®)

Acelepryn® is considered the **most effective long-term treatment** for chafer beetle control when applied by a licensed professional.

Acelepryn® is both a **contact-based and systemic pesticide**. This means it works when pests come into contact with treated areas, and it is also absorbed by the plant so that grubs are controlled when they feed on the grass roots. This dual mode of action is a key reason it provides longer-lasting and more reliable control than many other options.

Because this product is **restricted to professional use**, it must be applied by a contractor who holds a **valid pesticide applicator's license**. Proper licensing ensures the product is applied safely, legally, and at the correct rate and timing — all of which are critical for effective, long-term control.

For properties with **especially heavy infestations**, Acelepryn® can also be reapplied in the **fall of the same year**, helping reduce grub counts before winter and improve results the following season.

### Why homeowners choose this option:

- Long residual life inside the plant
- Can be applied earlier in the season for preventative control
- Stops grubs before wildlife damage occurs
- Also controls secondary pests such as sod webworms
- Classified as a **reduced-risk pesticide**
- Safe for pets and children once watered in and after 24 hours

### Typical treatment plan:

- Mid-April: First application
- Fall (if required): Supplemental application for heavy infestations
- Following April: Second application
- Optional maintenance treatments in later years if pressure remains

This option is ideal for homeowners who want a preventative, multi-year solution rather than reacting to damage each season.

## Option 2: Lawn Repair and Restoration

When chafer damage has already occurred, professional lawn repair can help restore the appearance and function of your lawn **once grub control is properly addressed**. Repairing turf without first reducing grub pressure often leads to repeated damage, so contractors will typically focus on sequencing the work correctly.

### Professional lawn repair may include:

- Removal and clean-up of damaged or lifted sod
- Soil preparation to improve seed or sod establishment
- Overseeding and topdressing for areas with partial damage
- Full or partial re-turfing where destruction is severe

Contractors can also assess contributing factors such as soil compaction, drainage issues, or thin turf that may have made the lawn more vulnerable in the first place. Addressing these underlying conditions improves recovery and reduces the likelihood of future failures.

## Option 3: Lawn Replacement and Landscape Renovation

For homeowners looking for a **permanent, low-stress solution**, contractors can remove problem lawn areas entirely and convert them into alternative landscape features that are far less attractive to chafer beetles and wildlife.

This option is especially effective for properties that have experienced repeated damage or where maintaining traditional turf has become costly or frustrating.

### Professionally installed alternatives may include:

- Decorative rock gardens with shrubs, perennials, and proper edging
- Raised planters or garden beds
- Artificial turf with correct base preparation and drainage
- Hardscaped patios, walkways, or gathering spaces

Contractors can help ensure proper grading, drainage, and base construction — details that are often overlooked in DIY projects but are critical for long-term success. A well-planned conversion can significantly reduce maintenance, eliminate grub-related damage, and improve how the space is used.



# Prevention

## Caring for Your Lawn Before There's a Problem

A healthy, dense lawn is your best natural defence against chafer beetles, weeds, drought stress, and wildlife damage. Turf that is properly maintained develops deeper roots, tolerates feeding pressure better, and creates fewer ideal conditions for egg-laying. The goal is not just to repair damage — but to build a lawn that is strong enough to resist it in the first place.

### Seasonal Lawn Health & Prevention Guide (Fraser Valley)

Season	Focus	Key Services	Why It Matters	Homeowner Tips
<b>Early Spring</b> (March – April)	Wake-up & root development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First fertilization</li> <li>• Core aeration (if not done in fall)</li> <li>• Overseeding (if needed)</li> <li>• Preventative grub control (Acelepryn® timing)</li> </ul>	Builds density early and stops grubs before damage begins	Rake debris, mow when dry, avoid cutting too short on first mow
<b>Late Spring</b> (May – June)	Strong growth & soil health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Balanced fertilization</li> <li>• Topdressing (compost/sand blend)</li> <li>• Deep watering begins as needed</li> </ul>	Encourages deep rooting and thick turf before summer stress	Water deeply and infrequently; maintain 2.5"-3" mowing height
<b>Summer</b> (July – August)	Stress management I	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Slow-release fertilizer (light)</li> <li>• Irrigation management</li> </ul>	Prevents drought thinning	Water early morning; sharpen mower blades; leave clippings on lawn
<b>Early Fall</b> (September – mid-October)	Repair & thicken turf (most important growing season)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Core aeration</li> <li>• Overseeding (best success window)</li> <li>• Fertilization</li> <li>• Lawn repair for thin areas</li> </ul>	Cooler temperatures and moisture create ideal growing conditions	This is the best time to improve lawn density and crowd out future problems
<b>Late Fall</b> (late October – November)	Winter preparation & root strength	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Final fertilization (winterizer)</li> <li>• Drainage corrections if needed</li> </ul>	Stores energy for spring green-up and improves long-term resilience	Keep lawn clear of leaves and debris to prevent disease

### Year-Round Best Practices

- Maintain mowing height at **2.5"-3"**
- Never remove more than **1/3 of the grass blade**
- Keep mower blades sharp
- Improve drainage in consistently wet areas
- A dense lawn is the **single biggest factor** in reducing chafer beetle pressure

## Closing Thoughts: *Thinking Long Term*

Chafer beetle damage is rarely a one-time issue, and approaches that focus only on repairing visible damage often lead to the same problems returning year after year. Whether you choose treatment, prevention, or lawn replacement, lasting success comes from addressing the underlying cause rather than reacting to the symptoms. Supportive lawn care practices — such as proper mowing height, overseeding, aeration, and soil health improvements — can further strengthen your landscape and reduce future pressure. A thoughtful, long-term approach will almost always outperform a short-term fix.

## How Sutherland Landscaping Can Help

At Sutherland Landscaping, our goal is to help homeowners understand the problem and choose the right long-term solution for their property. Alongside professional grub control and lawn repair, we have extensive experience delivering durable landscape renovation solutions — including lawn replacements and low-maintenance designs — that reduce future pest pressure and improve how outdoor spaces are used.



### Contact us today:

**Email:** [office@sutherlandlandscaping.org](mailto:office@sutherlandlandscaping.org)

**Phone:** 604-309-4996

**Website:** [sutherlandlandscaping.org](http://sutherlandlandscaping.org)

## Additional Resources

### Acelepryn® Product Overview (Manufacturer)

[Acelepryn Insecticide | GreenCast | Syngenta](#)

(Detailed explanation of how Acelepryn works and why it's considered a reduced-risk option)

### Chafer Beetle Life Cycle Explained

[Chafer beetle life cycle - The Lawn Man](#)

(Clear visual explanation of seasonal timing and why treatments succeed or fail)

### Acelepryn Safety & Mode of Action

<https://www.natureshelperinc.com/blog/acelepryn-insecticide/>

(Plain-language explanation of contact vs systemic action and pollinator safety)

### Grub Control Product Label Information (Canada)

[https://www.plantproducts.com/ca/images/grubTERMINATOR\\_grubGONE\\_PCP33319\\_label\\_2022-02-04.pdf](https://www.plantproducts.com/ca/images/grubTERMINATOR_grubGONE_PCP33319_label_2022-02-04.pdf)

(For homeowners who want to review product details and regulatory information)