

NEWS RELEASE

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European Chafer causing damage to Nanaimo grounds

Summary

Residents of Nanaimo are noticing unusual damage to turf grass in the community this fall leaving some areas dug up. The cause is the European Chafer beetle. The beetle lays eggs in the ground and then animals, including raccoons and birds dig up the grass to feed on the grubs.

While usually a sporadic problem, this year's fall season has proven to be challenging to parks staff as they work to reduce beetle damage in various areas across the City, including at City Hall and at the Bowen Cemetery.

Parks staff are following provincial guidelines and best management practices to work on a variety of methods to manage the grass and reduce the impact of this pest in priority areas. This includes handling Chafer Beetle infestations by implementing a range of turf care and Chafer Beetle control measures, including removing and repairing damaged grass and applying nematodes to the soil as necessary.

For more information on the European Chafer, visit the Government of British Columbia website.

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/farming-natural-resources-and-industry/agriculture-and-seafood/animal-and-crops/plant-health/phu-european-chafer.pdf>

Strategic Link: Our work here maintains standards of turf grass in the city.

Key Points

- The European Chafer, *Rhizotrogus majalis*, is a pest of turf, horticulture and field crops in North America. It was first discovered in British Columbia in 2001 in New Westminster and has now spread to other regions of our province, including Nanaimo.
- The adult beetle is a tan coloured medium sized scarab beetle (12 mm long). The larvae, or grubs, have a C-shaped body and brown head. Mature chafer grubs are up to 25 mm long, significantly smaller than mature Ten-lined June beetle grubs, which can be 5 cm long.
- The European Chafer Beetle will continue to be an ongoing management issue on Vancouver Island; however, through consistently implementing the recommended best practices, the impact can be minimized.
- Considerable damage to turf can occur in the fall and winter from animals, including skunks, raccoons and birds digging up the grass to feed on the larger grubs.

Quotes

"Despite the outbreak of grubs in Nanaimo this fall, City staff are working hard to repair our parks and other grassy areas. With management and time, these unsightly areas will recover. Please be patient as we face this collective challenge."

Leonard Krog
Mayor
City of Nanaimo

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