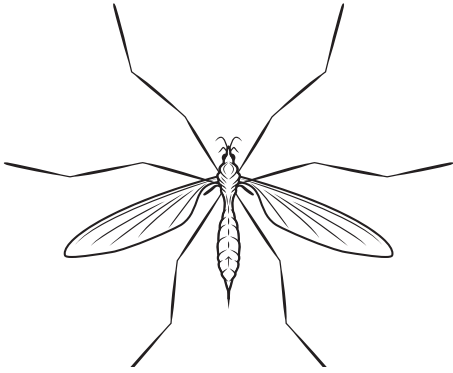
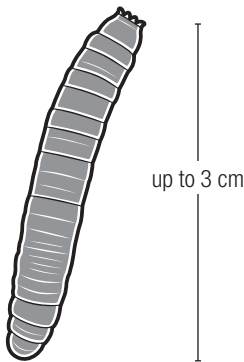


European Crane Fly & Leatherjackets



European Crane Fly (adult)



Leatherjackets (larvae)

The European crane fly is a new pest to Ontario lawns. The adult crane fly resembles a large mosquito but does not bite or sting. Adult females live for 4 to 7 days, during which time they lay several hundred eggs in the soil. The larvae range in size from 0.5 to 3 cm in length and are known as 'leatherjackets' because of their grayish-brown appearance. It is the leatherjackets that cause damage to lawns.

Damage from Leatherjackets

Leatherjackets feed on both grass roots (daytime) and grass blades (nighttime). Damage occurs in May and appears as yellow patches of dead grass. Warm winters may result in damage occurring earlier. By June leatherjackets enter a non-feeding stage, and move deeper into the soil where they remain until they turn into crane flies in August. The appearance of a large number of crane flies in August indicates the potential for leatherjacket problems the following season.

Monitoring:

In the early spring:

1. Cut away three sides of a 30 cm (12 inch) square of turf to the depth of 7cm (3 inches) and fold the section back.
2. Remove most of the soil from the roots and count the leatherjackets.
3. Replace the grass and water the area.
4. If more than 25 larvae were found, damage will likely be caused.
If grass is already unhealthy, as few as 15 larvae may cause damage.

Pesticide-free Treatment

Leatherjackets can be removed from the lawn with a rake in the early evening when they come up to feed. Larvae can be killed by placing them in soapy water. Repair any damaged area by watering and adding compost and grass seed.

For a strong, leatherjacket-resistant lawn:

Good lawn care practices can go a long way to offset and prevent leatherjacket damage.

In Spring

1. Raise the height of your mower to cut the grass at 2.5 to 3 inches (7 cm).
2. Use a stiff rake to remove thatch (dead grass material).
3. Aerate if your soil is compacted (hard).
4. Add a mixture of grass seed to your lawn. Choose seed mixtures that contain perennial ryegrass and fescues.
5. Check for water drainage problems and make improvements if needed.
Leatherjackets prefer moist conditions.

In Fall

1. Avoid watering if crane flies were present in August.
2. Fertilize in late October or early November to encourage deep root growth.
Use a slow release fertilizer.

Treatment

The Region of Waterloo's Pesticides By-law allows the use of pesticides to control against insects if an infestation exists. If 25 leatherjackets were found using the above test you may have an infestation. However, before applying any pesticides products, you must contact a licensed land exterminator to confirm there is an infestation. For more information about the Pesticides By-law, call 519-575-4400.

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