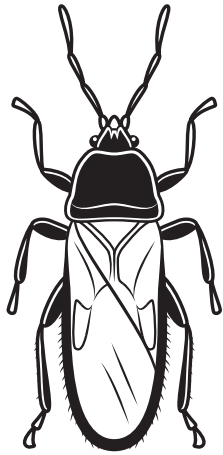


# Chinch Bugs

Chinch bugs are a common lawn pest that can damage parts of your lawn, but rarely the entire lawn. The adult chinch bug is quite small, approximately 4 mm long with a black body and shiny white wing covers. Chinch thrive in dry, hot weather and prefer to feed on grass in sunny areas.

## How is damage caused?

Chinch bugs feed by sucking sap from grass blades. Damage appears as small, sunken, dead patches in the lawn and may look similar to damage caused by other sources like drought stress, pet burns, or over-fertilization. For this reason, it is important to monitor your lawn to determine the source of the problem.



up to 4 mm

## Monitoring:

In Waterloo Region adult chinch begin to appear in lawns in mid-July. Damage can first be noticed from mid to late July, but severe damage will not occur until August after a long period of hot, dry weather. Early monitoring and treatment can prevent significant problems. Use the following test to check for chinch bugs:

1. Cut off both ends of a large can 20 to 25 cm (8 to 9 inches) in diameter. A coffee can works well.
2. Select a section of healthy grass near to a damaged area. Push the can halfway down into the lawn. Wear gloves to protect your hands.
3. Fill the can with water and wait a few minutes to see if chinch bugs float to the top.
4. If you count 20 or more chinch bugs, you may need to take action.
5. Repeat this test in several different locations on your lawn.

## For a chinch-resistant lawn:

The best way to avoid problems is to ensure your lawn is strong, healthy and naturally able to defend against chinch and other insects. The following steps will build a pest-resistant lawn:

### 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 mixes that contain fescues and perennial ryegrass which are more resistant to chinch.

### In Summer

1. During dry periods, water once per week. When watering, water deeply – enough to fill an empty tuna can.

### In Fall

1. Add a mixture of grass seed again – early September is best.
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 chinch bug if an infestation exists. If 20 or more chinch bugs 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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