

Chafer Beetle



The grubs of the chafer beetle feed upon the roots of all fruit stocks but it is newly planted and established strawberries that they seriously damage. They are particularly common in light, well-drained soil near heathlands or woodlands. Chafer grubs can often be mistaken for Vine Weevils, only Vine Weevil do not have legs and are smaller.

DAMAGE:

The larvae are 'C' shaped, creamy white in colour and measure up to 40mm in length with a light brown head and three pairs of legs. They feed on the roots of plants, making them wilt and sometimes die. When fully grown they pupate in the soil and emerge as adult beetles between late spring and early summer to mate and lay eggs.

CONTROL:

There is no recommended method of chemical control available to the amateur gardener. Where infestations are light (and this is often the case in the vegetable garden), it is usually feasible to search for the grubs in the soil near plants that have suddenly wilted.

The grubs can be controlled biologically with the nematode *Heterorhabditis megidis* (Nemasys Chafer Grub Killer). This nematode can be used outside during August and early September when the young chafer grub larvae are close to the surface, active and the temperature is above 12°C (54°F). The soil or compost must be moist before and at least two weeks after application. The nematode will kill larvae within two to three weeks. Natural predators are available from Green Gardener (Tel: 01493 750061).