



# Bayer

## Protect against Chafer grub infestation before it's too late.

**With the summer playing season upon us, turf managers are urged to consider safeguarding against potential Chafer grub infestations now, before it's too late.**

Chafer grubs are a real concern as they can cause an unstable surface that is potentially dangerous for sports players as a result of slippage. From the point of view of groundsmen, a serious, untreated infestation could potentially close the facility for a whole season.

Bayer's Technical Manager and former Head Greenkeeper, Dr. Colin Mumford explains that the adult insects burrow into the soil and lay their eggs close to the surface before the grubs hatch and start feeding on the grass plant roots.

"Once this happens, the grubs essentially cut the roots off and kill the turf. In the most severe cases, the turf surface will actually come away from the ground and peel off like a carpet."

He goes on to say that this is a problem by itself, but it can be exaggerated, should any foxes, badgers or birds live nearby. "These animals will easily tear up the unstable turf in search of grubs to feed on. Situations like these have been known to cause catastrophic damage to the playing surface and can take an entire season to rectify."

These pests can be easily controlled, but Colin explains the key to overcoming them is being able to understand the range of species and their associated lifecycles. "There are four common species in the UK," he notes. "The Cockchafer is the largest but occurs more sporadically. The most damaging species are the Garden, Welsh and Summer Chafers."

He adds that the Cockchafer's lifecycle can take up to five years, while the Garden Chafer completes its lifecycle in one year. The Welsh and Summer Chafer both have a two year lifecycle.

Colin advises that the most effective control comes when an insecticide treatment like Bayer's Merit® Turf is applied preventatively. "This is when the beetles are laying their eggs and tends to be in late spring; however it can be anytime between the end of April to mid-July.



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“A turf professional will need to apply an insecticide at this time of year, up to and including the second instar growth stage, every year as not all grubs will be eradicated with just one application,” says Colin.

Turf Managers don't have much choice when it comes to choosing an appropriate treatment; this decision has been made all the more difficult due to confusion surrounding the use of neonicotinoids and the subsequent two year suspension of products containing certain actives (Clothianidin, Imidacloprid or Thiamethoxam). “Last year's high profile ban has left some Turf Professionals uncertain about which insecticides they are still permitted to use,” says Colin.

“To put it simply,” says Colin, “the suspension only applies to the use of these actives on flowering crops, which obviously, managed amenity and sports turf isn't.”

“Merit® Turf is an essential weapon for turf managers in the fight against Chafer grubs and Leatherjackets and maintains its approval for use on managed amenity and sports turf,” assures Colin.

“Turf professionals often don't realise that they have an infestation until they see damage to the turf; at that point it's often too late to achieve any meaningful control until the following year.”

Whilst timing and frequency of treatment are key issues, Colin adds that application technique is also important. “Merit® Turf must not be bulked up with any other material at application and needs to be applied evenly across the whole turf area. Hand held, drop type and rotary type spreaders can be used to apply the product. The latest application equipment to be added to Bayer's list of recommended spreaders includes EarthWay's new EV-N-SPRED Flex Select spreader. Through the new impellor design and unique interchangeable tray hopper system the Flex Select helps users to achieve an even and accurate application of Merit® Turf. Once applied, watering-in is critical to move the active ingredient through the thatch and into the root zone of the turf.”

