



False Japanese beetle

Strigoderma arboricola

Order Coleoptera, Family Scarabaeidae; scarab beetles

Native pest

Pest information: Turfgrasses, root-feeding grubs; adults feed on foliage of many species of plants, including nettles, potatoes, rose, and mint.

Description: This native scarab resembles the Japanese beetle. False Japanese beetles are usually not a problem species. The adult beetles are about 10-12 mm in length and are a dark tan- to-brown color with a slight metallic green color on the front third of the body. However, there are no white tufts along the dorsal abdomen edges as found on the Japanese beetle.

Life history: This insect has not been studied extensively. Grubs feed on plant roots, but a species list is not well known. Adults are found feeding on buds and flowers of wild and cultivated roses, mints, and other plants. Control is not necessary. Information on the false Japanese beetle is given so this species can be distinguished from the Japanese beetle, a major turf pest. There is a one year life cycle.

Overwintering: Grubs or prepupae in soil.

Damage symptoms: Adults feed on foliage and grubs damage roots.

Monitoring: Look for brown patches of turf that pull out of the ground, as the roots have been removed by grub feeding. Identify a grub problem by examining a square foot sample of lawn along the border where dead or damaged grass meets healthy grass. When grub densities are high, the blades pull away from the roots and the turf rolls back like a carpet. Skunks and moles are known to use grubs for food. Remember the grubs turn into adult beetles that emerge from the soil and fly to trees and shrubs to feed on the leaves before returning to the turf to lay eggs. In some species, control of adults is warranted if they are damaging ornamental plants.

Cultural control: Maintain healthy grass by fertilizing in the spring and fall and watering during periods of drought.

Chemical control: Do not use broad spectrum insecticides routinely, as they will do more harm than good and will kill the beneficial insects that live in the turf, which can cause pest outbreaks. Use insecticides in June and July. Timing of your pesticide treatment is important. The larger the grub, the more difficult it is to control with insecticides.

Biological control: Carabid ground beetles, staphylinid rove beetles, ants, spiders.

Plant mortality risk: Low



False Japanese beetle adult; note the lack of white hairs as seen in the Japanese beetle. (279)

Photo: Vera Krischik

Biorational pesticides: None

Conventional pesticides: None