

Billbugs



What is a Billbug?

Billbugs are a type of beetle. billbugs tunnel into individual grass blades and actually lay their eggs inside the grass blades. As the eggs hatch the larvae tunnel down the grass blade and damage the plant. This usually takes place during the month of May.



Damage and signs of activity?

The bad news about billbugs is that you will not know you have a problem until after they have done their damage. Billbug damage usually shows up in late June and worsens through August. Unfortunately, this damage is often masked by drought conditions that are present during this time of the season.



How to control Billbugs?

The most successful treatment for billbugs is proper watering. Lawns that are watered properly during drought spells can often outgrow the damage and are able to recover from any damage much more quickly. Regular core aeration also helps to keep thatch level low. Heavy thatch will make drought conditions more severe and creates stressors that weakens the grass.



Additional Prevention: Brookside's B.A.G. Program (Billbug, Armyworm and Grub)

An additional option is Brookside's B.A.G. (Billbug, Armyworm and Grub) prevention. This is a treatment that is applied in the spring, before any billbug activity occurs. It is taken up into the plants and helps eliminate the billbugs as they begin feeding on the grass. This can greatly minimize or eliminate any damage. However, lawns will still require water in order for the treatment to be effective.



I have Billbug damage, now what?

Once you have billbug damage, it is too late to treat them. It is time to think about repairing the lawn and scheduling a prevention treatment for the following years. The good news is that early fall (September) is not that far off and it is the best time to seed in our area. Depending on the extent of the damage, either **Core Aerating and Over Seeding** or spot seeding are the best methods to repair the lawn, unless there is heavy thatch. With a thick thatch layer it will be best to scrape off the thatch prior to reseeding. You should also consider adding a **Brookside B.A.G** (Billbug, Armyworm and Grub) prevention for next season to help prevent any further damage. This not only provides protection from billbugs, but also grubs and armyworms.



Adult maize billbug.

