Japanese Beetles
By: Kelly Feehan, Extension Educator
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Japanese beetles are somewhat new to our area. Unlike most insects, both the adult and larva of this insect cause damage in landscapes and gardens.

Adult beetles feed on over 300 ornamental and edible plants, especially linden trees, birch trees, roses and grapes. The larva is a white grub that can damage turfgrass roots and cause lawn areas to turn brown if 10 or more grubs are present per square foot.

Adult Japanese beetles are one-half inch long with a bright green body, coppery colored wing covers and tufts of white hairs on the sides of their abdomen. The larva is a c-shaped, cream colored grub with an orange head.

Beetles feed on the green tissue of leaves between the veins. Initially, leaves appear lacy because only the veins are left. This is called skeletonizing. Beetles also feed on vegetables and fruits and can become so dense they completely cover a peach or grape cluster.

Japanese beetle numbers vary. In some areas, the populations are very low while in others they become quite high and cause extensive damage. If you had beetles last year, chances are good you will have them again this year. If you did not have any last year, keep an eye out for them.

Beetles are present from late June into August. Monitor plants during this time, especially the favorites listed above. If beetles are found, do not use traps as a control method. Traps attract many more beetles resulting in increased damage. While traps zap quite a few beetles, they attract many more than they kill.

When numbers are fairly low and plants smaller, knocking Japanese beetles off of plants into a bucket of soapy water works well. For some reason, 7 pm seems to be the most effective time to do this.

Another way to protect flowers or vegetable plants is covering them with floating row covers. The covers will need to be removed on fruiting plants once blooming begins to allow pollination. Roses can be protected with a fine mesh netting.

When needed, organic spray options include Neem, Pyola, *Bacillus thuringiensis* (Btg) and Pyrethrins. These products protect plants for about 3 to 7 days. Repeat applications as listed on the label will be needed.

Synthetic insecticides to apply to leaves include bifenthrin, cyfluthrin and permethrin. These can provide up to two weeks of protection. Read and follow label directions to avoid damaging plants. As some of these insecticides affect pollinators, spray in the evening and after plants are finished blooming.

For perennials and roses, systemic products containing imidacloprid can be used in May to allow time for distribution within the plant. It is too late to apply these products this year.

Japanese beetles love linden trees. While they cause extensive damage to lindens and it is a stress, most healthy trees survive. And treatment options are limited for linden because it is illegal to use any systemic insecticide, one the tree takes up internally, on lindens. Consider using a tree service for treatment if you choose to treat a linden. They should know what legally can be used on lindens.

It is important to know that treating lawns for the larva will not prevent Japanese beetles flying in and damaging landscape and garden plants. Lawns should only be treated for this and other white grubs if there was unacceptable damage the previous season. The products used for annual white grubs will also control Japanese beetle grubs.